

Scripture Reading:

Luke 23: “33 And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God." 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself." 38 And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39 Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us." 40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." 43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

'Jesus Is Crucified'

Lord willing we are going to spend the next three Lord's Days considering three simple words:
Crucified, dead & buried.

Three simple words that we use to confess what we believe about Jesus before we come to this Table each week to partake of His Body & Blood. Simple words in the Apostle's Creed that describe the most important event in the history of man. Words that assure us that the penalty for our sins has been paid, the wrath of God has been propitiated *[kids, remember that big word?]*

Jesus came to save His people from their sins... **AND HE DID!**

- Three simple words that describe this final portion of Luke's Gospel and prepare us for the joyous resurrection on the first day of the week
- *[mention parallel texts in order of worship]*

Understanding what we confess here is central to the contentment of the Christian life... In the Gospels we often heard Jesus say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear."

- There are ears and then there is hearing
- There are words and then there is understanding

We will explore the deep meaning of these simple words – Simple words we should never confess casually!

- We will remember that we demonstrate how we hear and understand them each week at this Table.

The Apostle Paul reminds us that the message of the cross is power...

I Corinthians 1:17 “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." 20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world

through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

- At the cross we see ‘the weakness of God’ from a human standpoint
- But God is not weak!

As we have stressed many times the cross was not a surprise to God... Not a failure of ‘plan A’ where the Jews refused to go along with God’s plan, so He had to move on to establish the church age: Listen to what Peter proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost:

Acts 2: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know-- 23 Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, & put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.”

Not only had Jesus reminded His disciples on many occasions that the Messiah must suffer and die, but God had shown His people throughout the Old Testament that this was true & necessary...

- We are glad that the seed of the woman crushed the head of Satan, giving us the victory
- BUT, God also said that the serpent would strike the heel of the seed of woman...
Which we see here at Calvary

Remember the glorious picture given in Genesis 22 when Abraham is called to sacrifice his own son... *[tell the story]* Abraham offered up the ram as a burnt offering instead of his son.

- Now God Himself was truly presenting Himself as the sacrifice for sin!

Jesus is seen from Genesis to Revelation as the Lamb of God, the ultimate sacrifice that was pictured in so many ways in the Old Testament system of altars and sacrifices.

- Even the specific cruelty of crucifixion and the mocking of Jesus was pictured in Psalm 22, which I want us to take a moment to consider.
- A Psalm written when the crucifixion as a means of execution was seldom practiced if at all, and yet it is described in amazing detail *[review death by crucifixion]*

Perhaps our homework can be having some discussion about how we use the symbol of the cross...

- Had Jesus been hung as the means of His execution, would we place the hangman’s noose around our necks or on the walls of our churches?
- If He had been beheaded, would it be the guillotine that we use?

We must consider the wisdom and practice of those who have gone before, where the sign of the cross has been almost universally used in and by the church

- But we must at a minimum remember what the symbol represents...
- The penalty that Jesus suffered for ALL of our sins... Great & small

Psalm 22 is a good place to start:

1 “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

- *These are the very words that Jesus will soon utter from the cross as we will consider next week...*

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning? 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not hear, by night, and am not silent.”

- *Part of true Christian contentment is being able to rightly cry out in times of trouble: But we must see from this Psalm and the example of Jesus, that we know from whence our help comes, even in desperate times*

3 “But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. 4 Our fathers trusted in you; they trusted and you delivered them. 5 They cried to you and were delivered; They trusted in You and were not ashamed.”

- *Now Jesus has come to Calvary as the one great sacrifice for sin so this cry of David can be true for all the Saints in all of history!*
- *David’s confession is a picture of the suffering and shame of Jesus on the cross...*

6 “But I am a worm and no man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me ridicule me; they hurl insults, they shake their heads saying: “He trusted in Jehovah; let Him rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

- *All of those who Jesus put on trial, the Jewish leaders, the Romans and the crowds, representing Satan, the world and our own flesh are now at the foot of the cross saying the very things God said they would say!*
- *Then we see a promise that we claim for our covenant children where again the great example is found with Jesus as the Son of Man*

9 “But You are He who took me out of the womb; you made me trust even while on my mother's breast. 10 I was cast upon you from birth; from my mother's womb you have been my God.”

- *In the Garden we saw Jesus turn to the Father for the strength He needed to endure, remembering in part I am quite sure these words of comfort from Psalm 22:*

11 “Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. 12 Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. 13 They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging & roaring lion.”

- *We see here the entire suffering of Jesus from the agony of the garden to the final moments on the cross, but then we see the specific cruelty of the cross on which He hung...*

14 “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you have brought me to the dust of death.”

- *Jesus will soon utter “I thirst” to remind us that He was fully suffering all the cruelty of the cross in His flesh as we see in this Psalm*
- *Not only do we see the physical pain and suffering but the added cruelty of the mocking*

16 “For dogs have surrounded me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet. 17 I can count all my bones; they look & stare at me.”

- *Most of the religious leaders that stood and watched the crucifixion would likely have memorized this Psalm, and yet their head-knowledge did them no good...*
- *As Jesus had said they were truly the object of Isaiah's prophesy where he said they would have eyes but not see and ears but not hear*
- *We really see this with verse 18 which is fulfilled before their very eyes by the Roman soldiers...*

18 "They divide my garments among them and for my clothing they cast lots."

- *Jesus endured the cross because of the joy set before Him, which is what Psalm 22 then turns to...*

19 "But you, O Jehovah, do not be far from me; O my Strength, hasten to help me. **20** Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. **21** Deliver me from the lion's mouth; save me from the horns of the wild oxen."

- *And WE are not to be silent about proclaiming the Good News about the suffering of Jesus...*

22 "I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you. **23** You who fear Jehovah, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! **24** For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him; But when He cried to Him, He heard."

- *The darkest day of human history will be followed by the glorious morning of resurrection, but the suffering of this day was what allowed God to be just and the justifier of Him who has faith*
- *The Father could listen to the cry of His Son because He had presented Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin*
- *However, it must ALWAYS remind us of the awful price that was paid for our sin!*
- *And in doing this, we should join with David in living a life filled with praise and thanksgiving*

25 "My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise Jehovah -- Let your heart live forever!"

- *David, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, also understood that salvation was not just about him*
- *Jesus was not issuing "get out of hell free cards" for all of us so we can go to heaven*
- *The impact of what Jesus did on this cross would be felt throughout the entire world...*

27 "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Jehovah, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You, **28** for the Kingdom is Jehovah's and he rules over the nations. **29** All the prosperous of the earth will feast and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before him—even he who cannot keep himself alive."

- *When we confess that Jesus was crucified we are confessing that He is Lord of Lords and Kings of Kings*

- *To truly confess this, we must live as though we believe that “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Jehovah, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, 28 for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.”*
- *Most Christians in America today do NOT believe this is true and God cannot bless our efforts until we believe and act upon this once again!*
- *David concludes Psalm 22 by declaring that the Good News is NOT going to be kept secret!*

30 “A posterity shall serve him; It will be recounted of Jehovah to the next generation. 31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born-- That He has done it.”

- *And this is what we are still doing here today!*
- *We proclaim this truth in Word and Sacrament!*

This is what Jesus meant when He told the Jewish leaders, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me.”

- **This is what we proclaim each week when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper at this Table, ‘Proclaiming His death until He comes.’**

May we never say those words of the Apostle’s Creed without remembering the meaning behind them! As Paul explained to the Colossians:

Colossians 2:6 “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. 9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. 11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

All of the religious leaders in Jerusalem, the Roman authorities and the crowds were mocking Jesus that day, making what they believed was a public spectacle of Him.

- **In fact, Jesus was making a spectacle out of them, triumphing over them by the cross!**

May we live this week and all of our lives as though we believe that Jesus was crucified, dead and buried!

Communion Meditation:

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.