

## Good Friday

April 10, 2020

This is the Good Friday nobody expected but everyone needed. No Christian believes that Jesus went to His crucifixion today subservient to the Jewish leaders and Roman state. In John 11-50, Jesus says, "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down and the authority to take it up again. This command I received from My Father." In the face of death it is Our Lord's obedience to God the Father that reveals His true identity. Jesus is the Son of God. John 8:28, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you shall know that I AM, and that I do nothing of myself, but as My Father has taught Me." It will be Jesus's self-sacrifice on the cross that will reveal who He truly is. What His relationship with God the Father means and His relationship with you and I. The sacrifice of Jesus is salvific to those who believe in Him and the eternal life offered to all.

Today we are called to take up our crosses and to participate as much as we can in the self-sacrificing life of Christ. As we reflect on our isolation and self-distancing we are called outside of the city walls of Jerusalem to Golgotha. Where we find the abandoned Christ dying on a cross. His disciples and apostles are self-distancing themselves from their teacher out of fear. This Good Friday we self-distance out of self-sacrificing love. So that others may live. Jesus sacrificed Himself so that we may have eternal life. We do it so others may just simply live. In the middle of Jesus's sacrifice He prayed to His Father. Prayer was the only comfort He seemed to have in His abandonment. In our self-distancing we have the same comfort of prayer. Mind you we are not being slowly crucified. Yet God is there in the middle of both. We also have the knowledge that God does not abandon us when others might.

This may be the most educational and experiential Good Friday in many years. God has provided us with a greater opportunity to experience Christ's life this Holy Week. This week we reflect on Jesus's abandonment by His disciples, the disciples self-distancing out of fear, and Our Lord's self-sacrifice. We are called to do the same but for very different reasons.

This Easter we have had great self-sacrifice thrust upon us. We are temporarily and selflessly instructed to stay away from church. To be a church by not going to the church building. To be a community of believers by not gathering. To the average Christian this is very hard and a large sacrifice. Remember that God is still in charge and is still at work in our world. God's ways are not our ways. Remember that Jesus destroyed death by His death. That makes no sense and is not logical. Wait and see what comes out of all this self-distancing and self-sacrifice. We will probably be amazed at what God does. It will probably exceed our expectations. We self-sacrifice going to church these days for the health benefit of others and

ourselves. So that we may have a church later to gather and worship in. We are called to sacrifice our normal church life during Holy Week. We have been given this beautiful opportunity to practice self-sacrifice. Similar to Our Lord but not as intense. He calls us to self-sacrifice with Him as much as we can this Good Friday. In a small way we are called to go outside the city walls of Jerusalem to experience Jesus's isolation by not going to church. We do this in obedience even unto the death of our own will. In the middle of His suffering and abandonment Jesus remained obedient to His Father. Putting His will aside for our good.

In our own small ways we have experienced the last few hours of Our Lord in a deeper way. This Lent has been one of forced fasting and self-distancing and self-sacrifice. We have turned our homes into little deserts. Holy Week has taken on a greater meaning as we reflect on Our Lord's abandonment in our self-distancing and self-sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His will for the good of our salvation. We sacrifice not going to church this Holy Week so that some may simply live. In His abandonment Jesus prayed remembering that God did not abandon Him. This is a great example for us in our self-distancing and self-sacrificing. God is still there and in charge. He continues to guide the church. God does not make sense in human terms or logic. God is God and we are not. Maybe we needed a pandemic to realize this. When it is all over we will be amazed at how we have learned to be more Jesus like. We are called to remain faithful as Jesus was in His trials. This is our trial. Have faith that God will get us through it. Pray as Jesus did in His trials to the Father. We know the outcome of Good Friday. How God surprised everyone on Easter morning. He will surprise us again when this trial is over too. Keep the Faith, Pastor D.