

The grace mercy and peace of Christ our Saviour be yours this Good Friday. The title for today's sermon is 'Standing with John' and based on the reading from the Gospel of John, the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter. Let us pray.... Amen.

The theme for this year's mid-week Lenten services was 'They were there'. The sermons looked at some of the people who were around Jesus during His final days, or on the day of His crucifixion. Today we conclude by looking at the disciple John. Sometimes people get the disciple John confused with John the Baptist, but the easy way to keep them separated is to remember Scripture describes John the Baptist as a relative of Jesus, through Mary, and talks about John the Baptist only in the early part of Jesus life and at the beginning of Jesus ministry, but then he was beheaded by king Herod before Jesus got too far into His ministry. John the Baptist was never one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. Now, the disciple John was the brother of James, sons of Zebedee, was hand chosen as one of the twelve, and with Jesus all the way up to Jesus' crucifixion. The disciple John was the first disciple one to arrive at the empty tomb on the first Easter morning, and was called the disciple whom Jesus loved. The disciple John is also the author of the Gospel of John, 3 letters, and the book of Revelation.

Yet, looking at today's Gospel reading and the events surrounding Jesus death, only one of Jesus' twelve disciples could have answered 'yes' to the question posed in today's sermon hymn, the one which we just finished singing titled, 'Were you there'; the disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple John.

John was there, he was alone with the women. John was standing there when they crucified my Lord. John was standing there when they nailed Him to a tree. It is not clear if John was still there when they laid Him in the tomb, but from the account of the resurrection, John knew exactly where to go, and to which tomb to look into. John was there from the beginning of Jesus' ministry to Jesus' death.

John witnessed the brutality Jesus received.

So John stood at the foot of the cross, looking up at his friend, his teacher, and his Saviour, looking at the God of all creation nailed there for his sins, for your sins, and for mine.

Have you ever seriously considered the real cost of your sins. Have you ever looked in the mirror to see the full price of each of your sins. Good Friday forces a person to do just that: to see the real cost it took to earn our forgiveness, to defeat death and the devil, and to reconcile us back to God for eternity. The disciple John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, did just that. He stood in the shadow of the cross, as our Saviour bled and died for him, for you. John's words were deafening. John, the disciple who asked Jesus for the go ahead to call down fire on a Samaritan village for rejecting Jesus (Luke 9:54), the one who tried to stop a non-disciple from

casting out demon is Jesus name(*Mark 9:38*), the one who asked Jesus to do whatever the two asked him, namely for the two of them to sit one at Jesus left and right when Jesus right(*Mark 10:35,37*), John, the disciple Jesus loved(*John 13:23*) was speechless. John stood at the foot of the cross watching the pain and agony of Jesus exposed wounds from the beatings and the whipping, watched the blood dripping out of his Rabbi and Lord's head, from around the nails, from His back and sides. John saw the humiliation Jesus took, the spitting, the beatings, the sour wine, the stripping naked, the gambling over Jesus garments. He saw what it took to forgive his sins, the price Jesus paid for all our sins.

And that was just the physical side of the punishment. Because then it got dark and the full wrath of God was poured out for Jesus to drink, the full wrath for all our sins, and Jesus took it all upon Himself to deliver you.

The price for our forgiveness was nothing less than the pouring out of the blood of Christ. The price for our sins put to death God in our place. The price for your transgressions, for my transgressions, was that God Almighty had to leave heaven and all His glory, take on my sinful flesh, had to carry my all my sins, along with the sins of the whole world, and had to give up His own life, to an excruciating death, to cover my sins. And He did for me. He did it for you. Christ died for all sins.

God Almighty, in whose presence angels bow down in full reverence, was forced to His knees under the weight of my sins, under the weight of your sins. If it wasn't enough that Jesus was beat half to death by whips, He was forced by the Romans to carry His cross up to Calvary, so there your sins and mine could be nailed to it. Part of the price for our sins was the mother who bore Jesus, who fed Him at her breast, who nurtured and raised Jesus, also had to watch Him be brutally crucified. We say it is a travesty when a parent has to bury their child, yet in this case the mother of our Lord had to watch her perfectly innocent son die for the sake of every other mother and father and their children. God the Father had to send His Son, His only Son to die for my sins because in my sins, as you in your sins, we stand only condemned by our actions and our inactions, by our words and by what we fail to say. We have sinned. We do sin. We can't stop sinned. But Jesus can stop the punishment. We simply cost Him His life.

And Jesus came willingly to give it for you. Jesus was not forced. On the cross we see the magnitude of the love of God. This is the picture of our forgiveness. "**For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.**"(2 Corinthians 5:21) This cost is for

For on the cross Christ Jesus was nailed along with all your sins. In Christ the power and eternal punishment for our sins died with Jesus. For on the cross Christ Jesus suffered God's

wrath for your sins to bring you peace with God. On the cross Jesus died the death you and I deserve to give us His eternal life.

For in Jesus’ dying breath He declared “**It is finished,**”(John 19:30) and with those words, and with the death of our Saviour the power of sin, death, and the devil is finished over us. In Christ’s death we are given deliverance from sin, death, and the devil; we are no longer slaves to them but free in Christ.

Christ on the cross fulfilled the promises of God proclaimed through the Old Testament. Our Messiah has come. The prince of peace has brought us peace with God through His death and salvation through His resurrection.

**“He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”**(1 Peter 2:24)

This is what makes Good Friday good. It is that our God and Saviour did what we are unable to do. Because of His incomprehensible love for you, He gave all to save you from your sins, from the death you deserve, from the eternal condemnation you earned for yourself. Today is good because of what Jesus did to reconcile us back to God.

We can rejoice this day because we know what John didn’t fully realize, Jesus would not stay dead but would rise on in three days to proclaim the victory won, salvation accomplished.

So, we stand with John at the foot of the cross to see where our salvation was accomplished. But we don’t stay there. For if you want your sins forgiven, don’t go to Calvary. There forgiveness was won for you, but there it is not given out. You go to where Jesus promised to be: in His Word and Sacrament the Lord’s Supper. There forgiveness is not won for you, but there it is given out. So we gather at His call, in His house, and in the place he promised to be: to hear the good news and the forgiveness of our Saviour.

Today is Good Friday, but it is not the end, at least for us. Today we rejoice in Christ’s victory over sin, death, and the devil for you, for me, and for all people. Amen.

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