

Service of Word and Prayer for Good Friday
Zion Lutheran Church, Ridgeville Corners, Ohio
April 10, 2020

This Order of Teaching and Prayers (adapted from Divine Service, Setting Two) is part of Zion Lutheran's ministry during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic and "Stay at Home" orders in the state of Ohio. Orders for festival days and Sundays will continue to be made available while regular worship opportunities are not available. I will post audio recordings of these orders on the appointed day on www.zionrco.org. You are invited to listen and pray with me and my wife.

Pastor Carl Rockrohr

Invocation and Opening Verses

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Psalm 22:1-11

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

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock me;

they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;

8 "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Be not far from me,

for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

Collect

P: Let us pray...

All: Almighty God, graciously behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, to be given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" (*Lutheran Service Book 425 Public Domain*)

When I survey the wonder cross
One which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Message - “Seven Last Words of Jesus from the Cross” (*Jesus’ seven words or declarations from the cross are from Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19.*)

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Why did Jesus agree to be nailed to a cross? He could have stopped it. He was the Son of God Who performed many powerful miracles. Why did Jesus endure such agony when He was innocent? When a new Christian hears the story of Good Friday the first time, these often are questions. When long-time Christians reflect on the innocence of Jesus, and the unfair trial He received, and the depth of His suffering, it sometimes seems to make very little sense.

Jesus hurt no one. In fact, He healed countless people. Jesus never lied nor told anything false. Instead, He pointed out spiritual truth and also spiritual untruth. We humans often say we honor and uphold love, we value compassion and we accept only truth. But very, very often we do not. Too often we love the falsehoods. We are mean-spirited. And too often we take advantage of the weak. Often, we know the right thing to say and to do, but our will power is too weak to do the right thing.

Not Jesus. He really did tell the truth. He really did help the weak and hurting. He really did love.

Jesus even loved His enemies. He loved His enemies so deeply He would forgive them for nailing Him to the cross. Such love is astounding. In the midst of agony is love. It should not be a surprise to us if the cross of Christ is a mystery to the world, because the depth of Jesus love *is* a mystery.

“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Jesus’ promise to the thief on the cross quickly cuts through any idea we might have that our own good works get us to heaven. This thief was condemned by the Roman government. He had chosen to live an evil life stealing from people which now led to crucifixion.

The Gospels of Matthew and Mark record that at first this thief mocked Jesus, but Luke records a change in the thief. He admitted that there was nothing good within himself. He saw he had no chance of doing something to change his life any more. The man was nailed to a cross and left to die.

His only chance was that maybe Jesus could and would help. He came to see Jesus was different. Maybe Jesus did have a kingdom. Maybe Jesus was righteous and loving. Maybe Jesus could help.

And he asked Jesus for help, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

We Christians today remember our spiritual helplessness without Jesus. Without Jesus we are like the thief, sinful and evil with no hope. But in Jesus there is hope. There is life and there is forgiveness. This is why Jesus is on the cross... to forgive.

Hymn: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (*Lutheran Service Book 425 Public Domain*)

See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

We’re the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

[Jesus] said to his mother, ***“Woman, behold, your son!”*** Then he said to the disciple, ***“Behold, your mother!”***

Jesus was human like us in all ways, except that He did not sin. He had a human family – He had a mother. His mother was there, watching Jesus being nailed to the cross; watching Jesus being mocked and tortured; watching Jesus dying.

As the first-born son Jesus had responsibility to care for His mother, and He dearly loved her. His time with her would be forever changed and Jesus wanted someone to care for His mother. His disciple John was also there and He put him in charge of caring for His mother.

Jesus knows our human needs. He knows we have family responsibilities and He cares about our families. He knows we take care of children and grandchildren, and older parents and other relatives. Even from the cross Jesus knew His human family needed care. If you worry dear Christian about your family, turn to Jesus. He knows and will give you strength.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ***“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”*** that is, ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”***

When Jesus cried out these words He was quoting the first verse of Psalm 22. But whatever abandonment the Psalmist felt at the time when he wrote it, nothing could match this abandonment of God the Son by the God the Father. What was Jesus saying? What did He mean?

When Jesus cried these words out He was suffering abandonment by God the Father. We notice Jesus does not call out “My Father” but “My God.” This is the punishment of God upon all sin. Jesus suffered the pains of hell there hanging on the cross. Not anything like what we sometimes say, “I went through hell.” No – what Jesus said is different. Utter aloneness. Utterly rejected by God. Why?

Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains:

He wrote “God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.”

Jesus was holy and perfect, but on the cross He took up our sins. He took on the punishment of hell that our sins deserved. He did not deserve to be abandoned and punished by God the Father. You and I do deserve the horrible pains of the cross, for we daily sin against God and against other people.

But God's plan was for Jesus to take our sins upon Himself and away from us. Jesus' words from the cross show us the agony of hell suffered so that you and I never have to say these words.

Dear Christians, when you trust in Jesus it is impossible for God to abandon you. No matter what evil thing or what sadness you go through, never believe that God has abandoned you. As we live in the name of Jesus, God the Father cannot and will not abandon us. For He who had no sin, has taken your sin away... and now through faith in Jesus you are the righteousness of God.

Trust in Jesus.

Hymn: "Were You There" (*Lutheran Service Book 456 Public Domain*)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh... Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?
Oh... Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?

"I thirst."

The Gospels record that earlier during His suffering on the cross Jesus refused to take a drink. It was not uncommon to give the crucified person some mild drug that might dull the pain, or to give some other drink. But it is recorded that earlier Jesus refused such drink that would dull the pain.

But now Jesus wants to fulfill the Scriptures. All things had to be done as foretold. Jesus wanted to leave nothing undone or doubtful for our salvation. Psalm 22 prophesied the Messiah's thirst and Psalm 69 prophesied the drink of vinegar, and Jesus fulfilled these words. Jesus fulfilled all prophecies for you and me.

"It is finished"

These words are precious to us Christian. These words mean the suffering work of Jesus is all done. It is completed. All that Jesus came to do was finished. Salvation for sinners was accomplished.

Jesus' descent into hell was not a descent to suffer there, but a descent in victory. Hell and death has no more power over us when we believe in Jesus. Hell and death are dead to us because Jesus has defeated them.

Jesus told Martha only a few days before, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

Death, hell and sin are finished because Jesus say they are. We know that our bodies still die and decay, but it is clearly taught by Jesus that this is not the final end. No, Jesus has won life for us and wants to give us this life.

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”

Before when Jesus cried out in agony, “My God, My God what have you forsaken me,” He was separated from His Father because of our sin. His Father turned away from Jesus for a time that He might never turn away from us.

St. Paul wrote:

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written,
“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8)

Jesus has said “It is finished,” there is no more separation. All things are done that we might have true life as God intends for us. Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are at peace with us, and we are at peace with one another. Father, Son and Holy Spirit have accomplished salvation for all mankind.

Hymn: “Were You There?” (*Lutheran Service Book 456 Public Domain*)

Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?
Oh... Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?

The Closing of the Book — The Word Made Flesh Died

The Lord’s Prayer (whispered)

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Amen.

Hymns sung by members of the Zion Lutheran Church choir. You are invited to listen to hymns and use other resources at “Resources” www.zionrco.org.