

Sermon 4-14-17 The Sacrifice Isaiah 53:3-5

Dear worshipers of Jesus at the cross:

On Good Friday, the Church holds the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ in devout remembrance. We rejoice with humble hearts that through the sacrificial death of God's Son, the righteous anger of God has been turned away from us sinners.

There are 2 things that are made clear on Good Friday.

- First is the fact that God takes sin seriously. His wrath toward sinners is real.
- Second is the fact that His love for sinners is also real. The cross of Christ shows the extent of His love, the price He is willing to pay to redeem us.

We need Good Friday.

- Because it is our nature to underestimate God's anger for our sin
- Because it is our nature to become uncertain about God's favor when things go badly in our life

The Bible is full of evidence that God hates and despises sin and punishes it. Yet, we often take His forbearance and His long-suffering as proof that He overlooks sin at times.

- We look around and see how much wickedness seems to go unchecked and unpunished in our world
- We may draw the conclusion at times that God must not be all that concerned about sin

Both the prophets and the apostles testify to the fact that God is full of wrath toward sin and evil.

- This wrath cannot be equated with an emotional state of humans
- It has to do with His burning zeal for all that is good and His hatred for all that is evil
- His wrath is directed at time...against individuals and nations

The Apostle Paul says: **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” Romans 1:18**

Jesus refers to the wrath of God as “remaining on” those who do not “obey the Son” John 3:36 This is in contrast to those who “believe in the Son” and thus have “eternal life.”

God’s wrath as well as His fervent love toward sinners is revealed and finally resolved in the cross.

- In the suffering and death of Jesus on Good Friday, we see the extent of God’s anger toward sin as well as the depth of His love toward sinners.
- We cannot escape the fact that every nail driven into Jesus’ flesh...every ounce of His suffering at the hands of sinners, was a result of our own sin and that of the whole world.

May we be filled with humble remorse for the pain that our sin caused Jesus. Yet, God offers His Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 2:2

God’s wrath and love meet at the cross

Luther saw both the wrath of God and the love of God revealed at the same time at the cross. He wrote: “First, we are to consider the great, serious and terrible wrath of God against sin, since that wrath could be averted in no other way and reconciliation could be acquired through no payment other than through this one sacrifice...Second, here we must also see and recognize God’s inexpressible grace and love toward us, which comforts a person’s heart when he is frightened by his sins. Consider why God did this --- not sparing His own Son but giving Him up unto the cross and death as a sacrifice, so that the wrath would again be taken away from us. Romans 8:32

When it comes to the wrath of God no one really likes to talk about it. In some churches you will not hear about God’s wrath at all. In some parts of Christianity

God is a tame God who winks at sin and is only disappointed in people when they sin.

Think about it --- if we really considered our daily violations of God's Commandments as something dreadful and deserving of death and damnation, we would daily run...

- To confess our sins
- To seek to be free of our guilt

On Good Friday, we can no longer look at God as someone who merely winks at our sins or simply ignores them.

- We can't brush off our sins and say "Oops, I did it again"
- We are forced to face the reality of what God thinks about sin and what it deserves

If ever there was proof that God takes sin seriously, it was right there on the cross. It was there in the beaten, bloody, bruised and dead body of His Son. There God showed the world that He meant it when he said to Adam and Eve: "For in the day you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:17

When we see Christ on the cross we are compelled to see what God really thinks of our...

- Lying tongue
- Lustful thoughts
- Covetous desires
- Our gossip
- Our lack of fear, love and trust in Him above all things
- Our propensity to put the worst construction on everyone's words and actions
- Our inclination to worry and doubt God's love and protection

But God did not send His Son to the cross simply to make us feel bad.

- Good Friday is not a “feel sorry for Jesus” day
- Good Friday is not a funeral for Jesus
- Jesus willingly drank the cup of suffering for us

What we see in the cross of Christ ---- what we ought to see most clearly --- is the extent of God’s love for sinners. If ever there was proof of God’s love, proof of His mercy, proof of His desire to save, it was on the cross. There the holy God was taking out His wrath and anger toward our sin on Jesus so that we would not have to face God’s wrath for eternity.

By divine revelation of the Holy Spirit who has worked faith in our hearts we know why Jesus was

- Stricken, smitten and afflicted
- Wounded for our transgressions
- Crushed for our iniquities

Good Friday is a time for us to focus our attention on the sacrificial offering of Jesus on the cross.

- There Christ became a guilt offering for us
- There Christ reconciled the world to the Father

Luther wrote: “Jesus Christ is our mediator, our throne of grace, our bishop before God in heaven, who daily intercedes for us and reconciles all who believe in Him alone, and who call upon Him; that He is not a judge, nor cruel, except for those who do not believe in Him, or who reject His comfort and grace; that He is not the man who accuses and threatens us, but rather the man who reconciles us and intercedes for us with His own death and blood shed for us so that we should not fear Him, but approach Him with all assurance and call Him dear Savior, sweet Comforter, faithful bishop of our souls.”

We would not have known unless it had been revealed to us in the Word that in Christ, **“God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.” II Corinthians 5:19**

It is through the words of Jesus, His prophets and apostles that we know and believe that everything that happened on Good Friday was according to God's own will.

Isaiah writes: "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him; He has put Him to grief." 53:10

- Every whip, every jeer, every nail driven into the hands and feet of Jesus turned God's fierce anger away from our sin
- As Moses once stood between the wrath of almighty God and the sins of Israel, so, too, Jesus condemned to death by crucifixion, "turned away God's wrath forever."

As long as we remain in Christ, as long as we remain united to Him by faith...

- We are safe from God's all-consuming anger toward sin and unbelief
- This is why we run to Christ when we are overcome by our sinful urges
- This is why we remember our Baptism where God buried us and raised us up with Christ
- This is why there is such comfort for us in the Lord's Supper – Christian artwork from the time of the Reformation show the Lord being crucified, with the blood from His hands, feet and side flowing into chalices held by angels.

God declared our sin forgiven in Christ's death.

- Since Christ has turned away the wrath of His Father toward us by His death
- Now the Father turns to us not in anger but in love
- For our merciful and faithful High Priest, Jesus Christ, has made full atonement for our sins
- He has "borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"

Today we can breathe a sigh of relief that the dagger of divine judgment swept past us and landed home in the innocent flesh of Jesus, His Son.

- We thank our Lord for unleashing His wrath upon His Son cancelling our debt

- We wake up and go to work each morning not in our sins, but secure in the forgiveness of our sins won for us on the cross
- We approach our Father boldly having been cleansed of our sins through Holy Baptism, knowing that by faith we stand innocent before Him

This is how we the Church looks at the death of Jesus. This is why we call this day "Good."

- It was good that God placed His own Son under a curse
- It was good that the nails were driven into His flesh
- It was good that the spear pierced His side
- It was good that blood and water flowed from Him
- It was good that His head was bowed in death for us

Jesus Christ our Blessed Savior Turned away God's wrath forever; By His bitter grief and woe He saved us from evil foe ---- LSB 627

May these words, give us peace as we remember His Holy Passion.