

Sermon 3-30-18 Good Friday: God's Will Is Done Series of Meditations after each reading listed.

This is not what Jesus wanted. Of course, He did not want...

- The pain
- The humiliation
- The mocking
- The beating
- The spitting
- The dying.

But even more than that, Jesus never wanted these people, His people, to reject their rightful King.

And this execution among criminals is the ultimate rejection of Jesus' claim to be the One who brings God's will and God's Kingdom reign on earth as in heaven.

This is not what Jesus wanted.

The flogging and crucifixion are breaking His body, but what breaks His heart is love, love that wanted to bring these very people into the kingdom of God.

That love now speaks an amazing word, a word almost too wonderful to understand:

**Father, forgive them.**

Not judgment, not hate, not vengeance.

Even now Jesus stretches out His arms as a hen might gather her little ones under her wings; He stretches out His hands to receive nails, and still He prays:

Father, forgive them.

We learn that later many became followers of the Way: some who stood at the foot of the cross and laughed and spat and cursed Jesus as He died would later call Him God and Lord.

But for now, they reject His saving will completely.

And in the face of that rejection, Jesus persists.

- Jesus is unwilling to give up on them, even as they crucify Him
- Jesus is unwilling to give up on us, no matter how devastating our betrayal, how deep our rejection, how persistent our sin.

In response to those who would push Him away, Jesus continues to reach out nail-pierced hands as He prays for the very people who put Him on the cross.

Father, forgive.

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We kind of like it when people get what is coming to them. We have little sympathy for people who are just getting what they deserve.

But God our Savior desires all people to be saved.

Think of that!

Our Savior doesn't want people to get what is coming to them. Jesus doesn't want us to get what we deserve.

Jesus desires all to be saved, even this thief, even this common criminal who deserves the death that's coming to him.

The cross is Jesus being mediator and ransom at the same time. The cross ...

- Is what Jesus is willing to do in order to save people who deserve death
- in all its ugliness is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior
- means the kingdom reign of God is coming into our ugly circumstances
- means the kingdom reign of God is coming in the midst of sin and the consequences of sin; even in the face of death.

“Remember me when you come into Your kingdom” the sinner prays. And to this sinner who deserves death, the dying King replies, “Today...”  
Do we want to see God's reign and rule come? Do we want to see God's Kingdom will be done?

Then, we, sinners who deserve death, need to look on our crucified King, and pray, “Remember us, Jesus...and don't give us what we deserve.”

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It's sometimes called The Family Prayer, the family prayer of the people of God.

This Family Prayer is how Jesus taught His disciples to pray: “Our Father...”

It begins, and by naming God our Father, it names us one family, the family of God.

Our Lord, on the cross, is living out the Lord's Prayer.

- Jesus, on the cross, is hallowing God's name
- The cross is God's kingdom coming
- The cross is God's will being done on earth as in heaven.

And the result of Jesus living out the family prayer is a new family, a family of God, marked by daily bread (this is My body, broken for you) and forgiving our debtors (Father, forgive them)

The result of Jesus living out in His body the Our Father is a family led not into temptation, but delivered from evil: Jesus crushes the tempter's head even as the devil, that old snake, strikes His heel.

Mary, the mother of Jesus and John the disciple Jesus loved, stand together at the foot of the cross. As Jesus speaks through the pain, we hear the beginning of a new family, the family of God.

This family stands under the shadow of the cross and prays in faith together for God's Kingdom reign to come and God's kingdom will to be done, on earth, among us, in our families, as it is in heaven.

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Jesus hangs there in weakness as they pile on insult after insult.

- The crown of thorns in His flesh is itself a sign of their ironic mocking
- A crown for a king
- A thorn for suffering

This is all-sufficient grace; this is God's power being made perfect in weakness.

Jesus, at His lowest point...

- Rejected by people
- Abandoned by God
- Cries out words from a Psalm
- Cries out words from a hymn
- All about weakness, brokenness, thorns in the flesh, insults

That ancient hymn begins with painful words:

**“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”**

Jesus knows that song all too well.

But the hymn of Psalm 22 does not end with abandonment. When all around is weakness and suffering and loss, a powerful theme returns to the music:

All who see Me mock Me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads, “He trusts in the Lord” they say “Let the Lord rescue Him. Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him.”

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

- A company of evildoers encircles Me
- They have pierced my hands and feet
- I can count all my bones
- They stare and gloat over Me
- They divide My garments among them and for My clothing they cast lots.

But, You, Lord, do not be far from Me.

- You are my strength; come quickly to help Me.
- All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord

- All the families of the nations will bow down before Him
- For dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations.

### **My grace is sufficient**

It reminds me of a song Paul learned in the midst of suffering; Jesus, the same Jesus who knew what it meant to have a crown of thorns in his own flesh, that Jesus said to Paul what He says to us: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

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On the cross, Jesus is living out what it means to be thirsty for God’s righteous, Kingdom reign. Jesus is, even now, drinking the cup of God’s righteous punishment down to the sour dregs.

The One who said He would provide living water, the One who turned water of ritual purification into wine of the kingdom banquet, the Jesus who said, “Let all who are thirsty come to Me and drink” is now drinking the bitter draught of retribution, death water, the wine of God’s wrath.

When Jesus prays in the Garden, “Not my will, but yours be done” This is the cup He wants to avoid.

Yet for the sake of God’s kingdom coming, that God’s saving will might be done, in order to be the source of living water for all who believe, Jesus pours Himself out like a drink offering and drains the death cup.

For me...for you...for all of us.