

Sermon: Good Friday

Text: John 19:28-42 (v. 35)

Theme: That you may believe!

Goal: The testimony of the Christians lead others to faith.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: The details on Jesus' crucifixion are many. The Biblical Report could only say: *Jesus suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried*, as we confess in the Apostle's Creed. But the Holy Spirit inspired the Holy Writers in such a manner that we have a vivid picture of Christ on the cross and of all that happened before and after His death. Eyewitnesses described what happened on the Golgotha that Holy Friday.

The details in our text have three specific goals:

To show that Jesus was really dead;

To lead us to the true faith;

and to show how the Scriptures were fulfilled according to God's gracious plan.

I - Jesus was really dead

From the very first Easter Day, people tried to deny the death and resurrection of Jesus. - The Chief Priest, after the report of the guards who were on duty at the tomb, spread the lie that the disciples had stolen the body of Christ, saying that He had rose again. - Others say that Jesus didn't really die, but only collapsed. And when He woke up, the disciples took care of Him and said that He had resurrected. - In the time of the Apostle Paul, a heresy inside the Christian Church was denying resurrection of the body, even the resurrection of Jesus. Only the spirit is important, not the body, - they said. And this is current till yet among some sects.

The Gospels are clear that Jesus really died, was buried and rose again from the dead. The fact that Jesus didn't have His legs broken like the other two crucified proves that He had already died when the guards came. The soldiers saw it. And to have a final proof that He was really dead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, causing a sudden flow of blood and water. If it had been only blood that had flown, it would have proved that Jesus had only collapsed. But as it was blood and water, this was a proof that He was really dead.

We know from the Scriptures that it was necessary for the Lamb of God to suffer and to die as a ransom for the sins of the entire world. It couldn't have been otherwise. Jesus Himself showed to His disciples after His resurrection that everything had happened according to the Scriptures, as He had taught and warned them while He was still with them. (Luke 24;25,45.

Instead of questions and doubts, instead of following the criticisms of several anti-biblical scholars, let us accept with a thankful heart that Jesus “was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification!” (Romans 4:25))

II - That we may believe

The Evangelist John had a very specific goal when he wrote his Gospel about Jesus: He wanted to lead people to the true faith by his reports. It is not only a nice story book about a hero. It is not only a record to entertain the readers. Jesus didn't only perform some miracles; but His miracles were signs of His glory as the Son of God.

John wrote at the beginning of his Gospel, that John the Baptist “came as a witness to testify concerning that light (Jesus), so that through him all men might believe” (John 1:7). - After some miracles (signs) performed by Jesus, John wrote: “Jesus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith on Him.” (John 2:11) – About Jesus' teaching, John wrote: “After Jesus was raised from the dead, His disciples

recalled what He had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.” (John 2:22). - Several teachings and preaching of Jesus in this Gospel highlight that everyone who believes in Jesus had eternal life. (John 3; 10;15). - And John finishes his Gospel with the statement: “Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Now, under the cross, John gives his personal testimony: “The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe.”

It seems that John was the only disciple who stayed with Jesus during the whole time of His suffering and death. He went to the palace of the High Priest after Jesus was arrested on the Mount of Olives (John 18:15); he was with Jesus' mother under the cross and Jesus asked him to take care of Mary (John 19:25-27); and he was there when Jesus died and the blood and the water flowed from His side. But, as I have said, John was much more than just a journalist reporting an event. He recorded every detail and gave his personal testimony “that you also may believe”. His concern and his intention is to lead others to the same true faith that he had in Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

Many know the story about Jesus. It is world wide spread. Especially during this Holy Week even the secular news report about the story and the celebrations of Good Friday and Easter. But without a personal testimony, how can others know what Jesus represents for us? Statistic proves that more people become Christians by personal testimony than by big rallies and preachers. The apostle Paul wrote: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Therefore, GO home and TELL your family and friends what God has done for you... as our Watchword says, so that more people would come to the true faith in Jesus, our

Saviour.

III – The Scriptures were fulfilled

John and the other Evangelists as well always link the events around Jesus' suffering and death with the Old Testament prophecies. God's plan of salvation was perfect in all the details. The fact that the knees of Jesus were not broken like that of the other two crucified, and the fact that Jesus was pierced, were prophesied in the Old Testament (Ps 34:20; Ps 22:16; Zech 12:10). Jesus is the suffering Messiah from Isaiah 53 (as we read today); He is the One that was abandoned by God (as we read in Psalm 22); He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, fulfilling all the rituals and sacrifices of lambs and goats of the Old Testament in His death.

Conclusion: We sing a beloved Hymn: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee; let the water and the blood, from Thy riven side which flowed, be of sin the double cure: Cleanse me from its guilt and power. (LW 361,1). We look to the pierced Jesus on the cross, to His blood and water that flowed from His side, and believe that we are free from the eternal sufferings we deserve because of our sins. They are forgiven by the blood of Jesus when we believe in Him. This comforts us all the time. But over all, we believe that the crucified Jesus rose again on Easter Sunday to give us life, eternal life! He went back to the Father and He promised to come back to take us with Him to the heavenly realm, where He is preparing room for us. “Thousand, thousand thanks are due, Dearest Jesus, unto you.” (LW 94). At the Lord's Supper we receive His body and blood and we are forgiven. Amen.

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