4-19-19

John 19:16 Good Friday

After suffering humiliation, beating, and scourging, our Saviour was handed over to be crucified. Nailed to a cross, lifted up in the air, and left to hang there and die. All the while being ridiculed by the people. It is important for us to remember that Jesus, who is fully man, died. It is natural for a man to die, especially when he has gone through all that Jesus went through. Jesus’ death was also unnatural; Jesus, who is fully God, suffered death. It is not natural for God to die; He is the creator, all-powerful, and eternal God; He has no end. Yet He subjected Himself to death on our behalf. Additionally, from Romans 6:23, “The wages of sin is death.” Jesus received wages He did not earn; He was without sin. Death had no claim on Him.

During the time Jesus was on the cross, the Gospel writers tell us the seven things Jesus said. Each of these things have profound significance. I can only touch a few points in the time we have. As we look into each of His sayings from the cross, consider His strength. In spite of His agony, Jesus is able to think clearly, have compassion, fulfil Scripture, and remain completely faithful to His Father.

1) Luke 23:34 “But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Here is Jesus, covered in blood and grime, hanging on a cross, and He prays for His enemies. And before we think of His enemies as “them”, remember in Romans 5:10 that we ourselves are identified as enemies of God until our acceptance of Christ. So, here our Saviour prays for us.

Jesus is not simply asking for the Father to “let this slide”. He is not asking the Father to let justice go and not have accountability; this would be against the very nature of God. Jesus is asking for them to later repent and turn to Him as Saviour. Jesus knows that He is paying the price for the very sin they are committing; and He is asking God to draw them to Christ to receive that atonement.

We also see here Jesus being the perfect example of what He taught. Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”. How much more of an enemy can you have than someone who is killing you? How much more can you be persecuted than to be hung on a cross? And here is Jesus, praying for them; asking for their eternal salvation; so that they can spend eternity with Him. Jesus is asking for these people to be able to have communion with Him forever. What love Christ has for us.

2) Luke 23:43 And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” This criminal who was hanging on a cross beside Jesus; who just moments ago, had joined with the crowd and the other criminal in hurling verbal abuse at the Christ, now askes to spend eternity with Him. What audacity, what nerve, to suddenly ask this after a life of rebellion to God, when in the face of death. And we have no more business asking mercy than did this thief. And yet, this is precisely what Jesus came for. To offer salvation to sinners who don’t deserve it.

As Jesus hung on the cross, He didn’t answer or argue with those who abused Him. But He immediately paid attention to one who called to Him for mercy. While bearing the sins of the world, He was still concerned about an individual. This is the Christ we serve. Again, He fulfilled what He claimed during His ministry. John 6:37 “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.” The Holy Spirit worked in this criminal’s heart so that he came to Jesus, and Jesus did not turn him away, but accepted him forever.

3) John 19:26-27 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!”

While still in agony, Jesus showed His reverence for the command of God. Exodus 20:12, Honor your father and your mother. In obedience to this command and also in fulfilling His duty as the eldest Son, Jesus provided for His mother.

Notice that while Jesus was fulfilling a great spiritual responsibility, while He was, first and foremost doing the work of His Father, He did not neglect His responsibility to His family. Yes, Jesus had taught that God must come first and above all else; but at the same time, we do not turn our back on our own. The family unit is a representation of the relationship between Jesus and His people, and the relationship between God and His children; in that respect, the family unit is sacred and important.

Jesus further demonstrated God’s concern for widows. We often read in God’s word that it is God’s desire that we care for the helpless; the widows and the orphans. Jesus perfectly demonstrates how to respond to God’s concern.

It is important to get the full meaning of the words “Behold your son”. Certainly, Jesus was telling Mary that from this point on, she was in the care of the apostle John. But we can also see that she was being called to look upon her Son Jesus. In spite of her blessed and honored position, Mary still needed a Saviour, and her Son Jesus, was her Saviour.

4) Matthew 27:46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” We are able, in our mind’s eye, to witness the terrible suffering of our Saviour. We can picture the blows, the lashes, the spikes, the hanging from the cross; we can picture the blood and the sweat and the dirt that clung to Him. We can imagine the misery caused by the heat of the day and even of the jeering of the people He loved. But we can’t picture the agony He suffered when the man Jesus was separated from His Father.

In these words, we get some small sense of what it was like to bear the full burden of God’s wrath and judgement; and a small glimpse of the eternity of those who refuse Christ. Notice how Jesus always refers to His *Father*; but in this time of separation, He speaks of His *God*. Picture what is happening here during the crucifixion and picture Jesus speaking in Psalm 22:4-10

In You our fathers trusted;
They trusted and You delivered them.
To You they cried out and were delivered;
In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

But I am a worm and not a man,
A reproach of men and despised by the people.
All who see me sneer at me;
They separate with the lip, they wag the head, *saying*,
“Commit *yourself* to the Lord; let Him deliver him;
Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him.”

Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb;
You made me trust *when* upon my mother’s breasts.
Upon You I was cast from birth;
You have been my God from my mother’s womb.

Jesus trusted God entirely even from birth. And now, by faith, He continued to trust Him. An example to us to trust God no matter what. Yes, Jesus experienced death; but God was still faithful and ultimately delivered Him.

5) John 19:28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.” We see here the intense suffering of our Saviour. To be truly thirsty is a terrible thing. The night before, He has shared His last meal with His friends. Immediately He went to the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed so intensely that He sweated great drops of blood; and so, His dehydration began. He was given nothing while interrogated by priests, Pilate, and Herod. He was marched back and forth between palaces and headquarters. He was beaten and scourged, He suffered much loss of blood. He carried His cross in the heat of the day and was hung on it during the same. Worst of all, He suffered separation from the Living Water that comes from His Father.

We see this human suffering, but we also see the strength of deity. He was concerned for Scripture. Remember Matthew 5:18 For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Even after all He had been through, He was concerned for the fulfillment of Psalm 69:21. “[F]or my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” The man Jesus made known His thirst, so that in the sovereignty of God, they would provide Him with sour wine.

Jesus demonstrates His physical need as a man, but He also demonstrates His spiritual need for communion with His Father. His body needed water, but His soul needed God.

6) John 19:30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” We remember this day to bring us face to face with all that Christ endured on our behalf. We ought not to think about these sufferings in a sense of guilt; Jesus’ work on the cross was to remove all guilt. We ought to think on these things with gratefulness. To consider the sufferings of Christ need to bring us closer to Him, to increase our love for Him, to heighten our desire to be with Him for eternity.

But now, Jesus says “It is finished.” His suffering is over and He has accomplished all the work on the cross He came to do. All of God’s justice has been served, all of God’s wrath has been spent, on behalf of all those who will turn to Jesus for salvation. In Christ Jesus, there is now no condemnation; sin has been forgiven and guilt has been taken away. We become sons and daughters of God. Christ has endured His suffering, and now it will stop.

He is an example to us; we are to endure. Matthew 10:22 You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. We are called to cling to Christ no matter what. We may suffer on account of His name, or we may suffer simply because we live in this fallen world. Regardless, we must endure until our own death or until the Lord returns. This endurance is a work we perform, yet it is all in the power of the Holy Spirt. For us to endure is an evidence of the indwelling Holy Spirit and that we have been sealed with Him. We who are truly saved will endure.

7) Luke 23:46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.” Having said this, He breathed His last. Here is the power of God in Jesus Christ; His life was not taken from Him; He lay it down Himself; He lay it down for His friends. In Matthew, the wording is that He “dismissed His Spirit”. Jesus made a startling claim back in John 10:17-18.

For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Here Jesus proved His own words. He didn’t simply manage to utter these words in a dying gasp; They were a command He gave. They were in obedience to the Father; they were in complete faith in the Father; and He even quoted from Psalm 31:5 when He did it.

In John’s Gospel, we are told that Jesus bowed His head when He said this. If He bowed His head, then He had been holding it up. Again, the strength of our Saviour; even after all He had been through, He still held up His head. This is indeed a King.

Prayer

LORD God, we have gathered together this day, specifically to remember Your Son and our Saviour. To remember what He went through on our behalf. We remember what man did to Him, what satan did to Him, and even that You were pleased to crush Him. He did all in obedience to You and in love for us. We worship Him!

He is worthy to be King and we are grateful to be His subjects. He has saved us from hell and we will forever serve Him. It will be a joy to do so; it will be a joy to have fellowship with Him and with You. By His work we have access to You.

Now Jesus, we can only thank You for what You have done. Use us for the upbuilding of Your Kingdom. What You have done on the cross has brought You much glory; by it, You have defeated satan. May Your glory be multiplied forever.

It is in Your name that we humbly pray

Amen