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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 14, 2018
5th Midweek Lent

Scriptures: Psalm 40; Passion Jesus scourged, mocked, condemned
Hymns: 149; 157; 388; 175

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Luke 23:32-43

There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.³³ And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

And they divided His garments and cast lots.³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine,³⁷ and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: The Torments of His Passion

As we consider the Passion of Christ we do tend to think about the physical abuse; that is too small a word isn't it? The physical torture that Jesus endured. Surely that was a significant portion of our Lord's sufferings. In the prophets we read of Jesus' stripes. Of the intensity of His thirst, of His physical and emotional distress. The opening line of our passion reading this evening simply reported that Jesus was flogged. One short sentence for one of the most gruesome horrors man could inflict on another man. Thirty-nine times the scourge made up of nine leather straps, each with bits of sharpened metal implanted in them, was thrown against and drawn across our Redeemer's back. We might well recall also the abuse Jesus endured at the hands of one group of soldiers after another. Each of them taking their turn to add blows to His face and body. Again in our passion reading we were reminded of that crown of thorns that was planted upon His head after Jesus was scourged, and how the Roman guards used the staff that had put in Jesus' hands to repeatedly strike Him on the head. After all this Jesus was so brutalized that many would have turned their faces from Him. (Isaiah 53:3) Pilate thought that after all this Jesus' appearance would incite some sympathy. However when He brought Jesus out before the people wearing the purple robe with the crown of thorns pressed down upon His brow, there was none who spoke in His defense. The cry only grew in intensity, "Crucify! Crucify Him!"

And so this evening we go that next step in comprehending the cost of our salvation in observing --

THEME: The Redeemer of the Word Crucified.

He was

I. Crucified with Criminals.

Our text records the facts:

Luke 23:32-34 “There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. ³³ And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.’ ”

The facts are clear enough. There were three men that were to be executed that day. They were taken together out to Calvary. Our text makes a distinction for us in labeling the others as criminals. They were not innocents like Jesus was. Some surmise that they were associates of Barabbas, but we don't know that for sure, and it doesn't really matter. Some suggest names for the men, but again their names don't matter or else their names would have been revealed by the Holy Spirit. What matters is that they were guilty. They were condemned criminals. Jesus was taken with them to Calvary, and they were crucified together, one on Jesus' right hand and the other on Jesus' left, with Jesus then in the middle.

Some may argue that appearances don't really matter, but appearances do deliver a message. There were a good many enemies of Jesus gathered at Golgotha who thought that Jesus was right where He belonged because He had been troublesome to them. Others there knew Jesus, loved Jesus, and understood that He was innocent, perfectly innocent. To see Him as He was, brutalized almost beyond recognition, and then suspended from the cross where He was suffering even more agonizing pain must have grieved the hearts of those who loved Him. Those are the facts, but only on the surface.

There is more truth to be known, deeper truth to be understood from these facts. We gain insight from the Spirit's message through the prophet Isaiah:

Isaiah 53:b “And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors.”

Yes, the Scriptures were fulfilled, and verified that Jesus is the Christ who was to come as the Redeemer of the world. However, we need to meditate upon the significance of Jesus being numbered with the transgressors. He was crucified as a guilty man. Although

He had never sinned, **ever**, yet He carried a load of guilt to Calvary. He “bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” (1 Peter 2:24) And so He was numbered with the transgressors. Because of “crimes that I had done, He groaned upon the tree.” (The Lutheran Hymnal 154:2) He didn’t deserve to be there, and yet we see the Redeemer of the World –

II. Crucified with Tempting Derision.

Everything that was happening around Jesus while on the cross was so vile, so degrading. Again our text reports the facts for us.

Luke 23:34b-39 “And they divided His garments and cast lots.
³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, ‘He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.’

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, ‘If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.’

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

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³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, ‘If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.’ ”

They had stripped Jesus of His clothes exposing His brutalized body to the elements, to the view of all. But the guards had little sympathy. They were busy claiming Jesus’ meager earthly remains. They divided His clothes and cast lots for His one uncommon, seamless under garment. Even as they were engaged in that activity, the mockery and derision was being thrown in Jesus’ face. Yes, the sign stating the cause of execution declared Jesus of Nazareth to be the King of the Jews. It was spelled out for all to read. It declared far more truth than most would ever realize, for it was as our King as our replacement, as our Champion, that Jesus suffered pain and indignities upon the cross.

His enemies looked at Him and saw a totally helpless man. He wasn’t such a big deal now on the cross, they surmised. And so they challenged Him, that if was the Christ, if He was the King of the Jews then He should save Himself. Surely this was intended by

the devil to be a great temptation. If Jesus would do what He could do, if Jesus did indeed deliver Himself from this agony of the cross God's whole plan for the salvation of the world would be undone. Wasn't it more than clear by all that this rabble said and did that they didn't deserve to be saved? Indeed that couldn't have been clearer.

That remains as true of us today as it was for the worst of those gathered at the cross. But the taunts from sinful men didn't undermine the Savior's love, not even for those who crucified Him. Instead He prayed, "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.*" (v.34) In these facts we see evidence of the Savior's determination to be the Redeemer of the world. He was --

III. Crucified to Secure Paradise for Sinners.

Yes, even the condemned joined in the derision, but then from one of these condemned to die comes the clearest testimony given of Jesus on that day.

Luke 23:40-43 "But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?' ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.'

⁴² Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.'

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'

This word of rebuke came from a repentant heart. He observed all that had been going on. What he saw, what he had heard, what he had previously known of this Jesus was mixed with faith by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. It is clearly evident that this man was saved by grace through faith, a faith that was also a gift of God. It is also a prime example of what Paul wrote to the Romans: "*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*" (Romans 10:10)

Yes, with a heart filled with faith, the condemned malefactor turned to Jesus in hope of salvation, a hope that would not be put to shame. He believed that Jesus was coming into His kingdom even

as Jesus languished on the cross! Only eyes of faith could see and believe this to be true. Did anyone else present that day at Calvary comprehend this wonder/ Believing the malefactor pleaded with the Redeemer of the world to remember him, an unworthy sinner. The hope of salvation this sinner received is precious indeed. As he suffered such agony in his last hours in this life he could look forward to a sure and certain hope of everlasting life through faith in Jesus. On that very day he would be with His Lord in Paradise.

What a wondrous hope of life is found in these words of our Redeemer, the Redeemer of the world. Because we know and believe that Jesus is exactly that, the Redeemer of the world, we are assured that by His crucifixion He has secured our place in Paradise also. We are assured of the blessed hope of everlasting life on the very day that we leave this world so dim. Our hope is sure. We have Jesus' words on it. Our hope is sure for we find that hope in the Redeemer of the world crucified!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)