

Good Friday 2018

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[0 : 0 0] Good evening everyone, my name's Ian, I'm one of the elders of the church. For the next few minutes I want to go back to that first Good Friday in Jerusalem and to think about some of the events, some of them we've heard or we've seen in the video, to think about them and particularly think about some of the people who were there and what it meant to them.

And then I hope to see what it can mean to us and the relevance today of Good Friday. So 6am in Jerusalem. It's Passover Friday.

It's the most important day of the Jewish religious year. The cock has crowed and the city is beginning to come to life. But over at the high priest's palace, no one has slept that night.

Jesus was arrested the previous evening very late, taken to the palace, and as we saw in the video, for hours they tried to find some reason to condemn him.

And they couldn't find anything that was really justified, but in the end they decided to send him to Pilate. Outside the palace is Peter.

[1 : 1 1] Peter is absolutely distraught. He has failed Jesus at the time when Jesus needed him most. Three times Peter has said he doesn't know Jesus, and the pride that he had before himself and the confidence that he had that he would never let Jesus down.

That is totally gone. He's totally deflated. He's in agony because of his failure. And perhaps Peter is the first person we should reflect on this evening.

Because I'm like Peter when I realize that I have failed before God. That again and again I have let Jesus down and haven't done the things I should have or have done things that I shouldn't do.

I am like Peter when I see my failure and my need before God. It's now nine o'clock in Jerusalem.

And the execution party has reached the place of the scow, Golgotha. And there three men are nailed to crosses. Two criminals and Jesus in between them.

[2 : 2 3] And as his cross is put into the ground, Jesus prays for those who have nailed him to it. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.

And then he looks down and he sees a little group of women standing near the cross, including his mother, Mary. And he says to Mary, as he points or as he looks at one of his disciples, John, who was standing nearby, he says to Mary, here is your son.

And to John, here is your mother. And John, as we listen to in the reading, John takes Mary to his own home. Even in his hour of agony, when he was nailed to that cross and in such great suffering, Jesus was thinking of others.

And in particular, thinking of his mother. And he wanted to show the love that he had for his mother, the concern that he had for her, by making sure that she was looked after.

Mary knew that Jesus loved her personally. And I'm like Mary today when I understand the love that Jesus has for me.

- [3 : 41] That Jesus loves me personally and cares for me and wants me to have a relationship with him. It's now noon in Jerusalem, 12 o'clock.
- Jesus has been on the cross for three hours. The sun has been beating down on the city and suddenly it goes. The city is plunged into darkness.
- It will be cold and it will be quite scary for everyone who is there. But for Jesus, something even worse is happening.
- Because what his agony is now is not just the pain of crucifixion. It's something much greater. It's something much greater. As he takes on himself the sin of the world.
- As he takes on himself my sin and my failure. As he is separated from God his father and he experiences the punishment that's meant for me.
- [4 : 41] But among all the people who are there and no doubt are quite scared and wondering what's happening, there is one person who has a certain peace.
- And it's one of the men who is nailed beside Jesus. Because one of the criminals there has recognized that Jesus is not just another person being crucified by the Romans.
- That he is not just someone who has fallen foul with the legal system and has been punished for that. Rather, he is someone who has done no wrong.
- And more than that, he is a king. And so this criminal says to Jesus, asks him to remember him when he comes in his kingdom. And Jesus gives him the assurance that today he will be with him in paradise.
- And I'm like that criminal on the cross when I recognize that the only hope I have is in Jesus. That there's nothing I can do to save myself.
- [5 : 48] But it's only through recognizing Jesus' death on the cross and what was achieved through that. That I can be right with God. That I can be sure that I will be in paradise with Jesus.
- That my sins are forgiven. It's now three o'clock. And Jesus gives that final cry of finished.
- And it's not a cry of defeat. It's a cry of victory. Because Jesus has done everything that is needed for us to be forgiven by God.
- For our sins to be fully paid for. And for us to have real hope for the future. And as he dies, it is having accomplished everything that he came to earth to do.
- Because he has taken the sins of the world. He has taken my sins on himself. And he has given me the ability to be forgiven for all the wrong that I've done.
- [6 : 49] And near the cross, as we saw in the video, there's a Roman soldier. A centurion. A centurion. And as the centurion who has presumably been there all day and has supervised the crucifixion.
- As he sees how Jesus dies. As he sees how Jesus dies. He too recognizes this is no ordinary man. And as he looks at Jesus dying on that cross.
- As the great events unfold in the days. The temple curtain is torn. As there's an earthquake. And all the things that surround the death of the Lord Jesus.
- The centurion says, surely this was the son of God. And I'm like that centurion when I see in Jesus the son of God who came into the world to be the savior of the world.
- No ordinary man. But God with us. God living a life that was perfect in every way. God dying our death on the cross as Jesus took my place there.
- [7 : 58] He is the son of God. And when I believe that, I am like that centurion. And now it's six o'clock. The sun is beginning to set.
- The day is almost over. As two men walk sadly away from a tomb. Joseph and Nicodemus have just completed the grisly task of taking Jesus' body from the cross.

Of wrapping it in grave clothes. And of laying it in the tomb that was originally intended for Joseph. And now they are walking sadly away thinking this is the end.

Not knowing at all what was going to happen on Easter Sunday. But Joseph, a man who was a secret disciple of Jesus.

Who wasn't known publicly before this as someone who followed Jesus. As he witnessed these events of Good Friday. His love for Jesus was so great that there was nothing he could do but give him the best that he had.

[9 : 06] Given even the tomb that he had bought and that was reserved for him. And when I want to give Jesus my best. When my love for Jesus is so great that nothing I can do or say is too much for him.

Then I am like Joseph. And now we're back in 2018. It's about 20 to 8. And I think all of us have to ask ourselves.

What is the relevance of these events so many years ago, so far away to me today? And which of these people that we've thought about am I like?

Well the answer should be all of them. If we are truly to know Jesus and to know his power and his forgiveness. We need to have something of all of these people in us.

We need like Peter to recognize that we've failed God. That we've done things that we shouldn't do and not done things we should have done. That we are, as the Bible would describe as sinners before God.

[10 : 17] And that should be something that gives us great sadness and great sorrow. That we have let God down and that by our actions we deserve to be punished by him.

And that makes us like Peter when we recognize our sinfulness and our favor before God. And recognize that something needs to be done about it. Then we need to be like Mary.

Mary who knew the love of Jesus for her personally. A part of the message of Easter is that God so loved the world that he gave his only son.

And that is absolutely true. But it is also true that part of the message of Easter is that Jesus loves me. Paul talks about the son of God who loved me and who gave himself for me.

And it's not just about the sin of the world. It's about my sin and my forgiveness and the love that Jesus has for me. And like Mary, I need to understand and to accept that love.

[11 : 28] And then there's the criminal dying on the cross. The one who is in an absolutely helpless and hopeless situation. Nothing he could do for himself but throw himself on the mercy of Jesus and ask for his help.

And I need to be like him as well. To recognize that there's nothing I can do to make myself right with God. The criminal obviously had no time and no chance to do that.

Well, we may have time, but we're not able to make up for all the wrong we've done by trying to weigh it up with good works. All the wrong we've done far outweighs anything good we might try to do.

The only hope that we have is in Jesus and entrusting in him and believing that he is the one who can give us eternal life. And then there's the centurion, the man who probably came that day without any thought of God or of what this might mean.

But through the way he saw the Lord Jesus, the death of the Lord Jesus, the way he treated others and the way he died, this man came to believe that Jesus truly is the Son of God.

[12 : 48] And for me too, that is something I need to do. I need to believe that Jesus is God's Son who came into the world and who died for me.

And then finally, there's Joseph. And Joseph tells me what I should do once I've done all these other things. When I've realized my sin, when I've understood Jesus loves me, when I've realized that only through Jesus do I have any hope, when I've trusted him as the Son of God who died for me.

Then I will want to love him and live for him and serve him and worship him. We're going to be doing that to some extent in a few minutes, as together we share in these elements that are before us.

And that is a really good reminder to us of what the Lord Jesus did as he gave his body and as he shed his blood for us.

But if we know him and we love him, it needs more than that. It needs all of our lives to be devoted to him. And day to day, our lives to be a sacrifice of worship for him.

[14 : 01] This evening, let's make sure, all of us, that we've understood our sin and that we've come to Jesus as our Savior. And if we've done that, let's rejoice in the forgiveness that we have in him, even as we saw what it cost him to bring that forgiveness to us.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you went to the cross and there you took my sin.

And as we reflect each one on our lives, on the way that we are before you, on all the things that we've done wrong, on how little we deserve from you, we thank you that you took the price, you paid the penalty for all our sins.

Lord Jesus, that you loved me and that you died for me. The Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Help us to understand more of what that means. If we don't know you personally, help us to come to a real faith in you and to know you as our Savior and as our Lord.

[15 : 18] And if we do draw us out over this Easter weekend in worship for you and a greater appreciation of who you are and all you've done for us. We pray you'll be with us now as we enter into this time of communion and as we particularly remember together your death for us.

We give you our thanks, Lord Jesus, in your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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