

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH PENANG



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Good Friday

April 7, 2023

***"Be reverent, for this is the house of the Lord.
Before the service, speak to God.
During the service, let God speak to you.
"After the service, speak to one another at the fellowship area."***



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Our Vision

Nurturing Disciples to be a Spirit-filled, Impactful Church

The 4 Essentials

***Personal Growth, Building Community,
A Voice to Our Nation, A Vision for the World***

GREETINGS

L: It is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ –

P: if, in fact, we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

OPENING PRAYER

God of power and mercy, in love You sent Your Son that we might be cleansed of sin and live with You forever. Bless us as we gather to reflect on His suffering and death that we may learn from His example the way we should go. We ask this through that same Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The First Word:

“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing.”

(Luke 23:34)

Reflection

The first word of Jesus from the cross is a word of forgiveness. That is the point of the cross. Jesus is dying so that we might be forgiven for our sins, so that we might be reconciled to God for eternity.

But the forgiveness of God through Christ does not come only to those who don’t know what they are doing when they sin. In the mercy of God, we receive His forgiveness even when we do what we know to be wrong. God chooses to wipe away our sins, not because we have some convenient excuse, not because we have tried hard to make up for them, but because He is a God of amazing grace, with mercies that are new every morning.

As we read the words, “Father, forgive them,” we need to understand that we too are forgiven through Christ. As 1 John 1:9 says, “...if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.” Because Christ died on the cross for us, we are cleansed from all wickedness - from every last sin. We are united with God the Father as His beloved children. We are free to approach His throne of grace with our needs and concerns. God “has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.” What great news!

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you really believe that God has forgiven all your sins?
2. Do you take time on a regular basis to confess your sins so that you might enjoy the freedom that comes with forgiveness?
3. Do you need to experience God’s forgiveness in a fresh way today?

Prayer

Gracious Lord Jesus, it is easy for us to speak of Your forgiveness - to even ask for it and to thank You for it. But sometimes we don't really believe that we're forgiven. We don't always experience the freedom that comes from the assurance that You have cleansed us fully from our sins. We live as if we were "semi-forgiven". Even though we've put our faith in You and confessed our sins, we sometimes live as though sin still has power over us. We sometimes try to prove ourselves to You, as if we might be able to earn more forgiveness.

Loving Saviour, even though we believe at one level that You have forgiven us, this amazing truth needs to penetrate our hearts in new ways. Help us to know with fresh conviction that we are fully and finally forgiven, not because of anything we have done, but because of what You have done for us.

May we live today as forgiven people, opening our hearts to You, and choosing not to sin because the power of sin has been broken by Your salvation.

All praise be to You, Lord Jesus, for Your matchless forgiveness! Amen.

The Second Word:

"I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

(Luke 23:43)

Reflection

As Jesus hung on the cross, He was mocked by the leaders and the soldiers. One of the criminals being crucified with Him added his own measure of scorn. But the other crucified criminal sensed that Jesus was being treated unjustly. After speaking up for Jesus, He cried out, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus responded to this criminal, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise." The word *paradise*, from the Greek word *paradeisos*, which meant "garden," was used in the Greek Old Testament as a word for the Garden of Eden. In Judaism of the time of Jesus, it was associated with heaven, as well as the future when God would restore all things to the perfection of the Garden. Paradise was sometimes thought to be the place where righteous people went after death. This seems to be the way Jesus uses *paradise* in this passage.

Thus we have encountered one of the most astounding and encouraging verses in all of Scripture. Jesus promised that the criminal would be with Him in paradise. Yet the text of Luke gives us no reason to believe this man had been a follower of Jesus, or even a believer in Him in any well-comprehended sense. He might have felt sorry for his sins, but he did not obviously have opportunity to do anything to demonstrate his repentance. Rather, the criminal's cry to be remembered seems more like a desperate, last-gasp effort.

Though we should make every effort to have right theology and live each day as disciples of Jesus, in the end, our relationship with Him comes down to simple faith. "Jesus, remember me," we cry. And Jesus, embodying the mercy of God, says to us, "You will be with me in paradise." We are welcome there not because we are able to have right theology or because we are able to live rightly, but because God is merciful, and we have put our faith in Jesus.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you called out to Jesus for mercy?
2. Have you put your ultimate trust in Him, and not in your ability to understand or behave a certain way?
3. How confident are you that, when your time comes, you will be with Him in paradise?

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, how we wonder at Your grace and mercy! When we cry out to You, You hear us. When we ask You to remember us when You come into Your kingdom, You offer the promise of paradise. Your mercy, dear Lord, exceeds anything we might imagine. It embraces us, encourages us, heals us.

O Lord, though our situations are so different from the criminal who cried out to You, we are nevertheless quite like him. Today we live, trusting You and You alone. Our lives, both now and in the world to come, are in Your hands. And so we pray:

Jesus, remember us when You come into Your kingdom! Jesus, remember us today as we seek to live within Your kingdom! Amen.

HYMN

Were You There
(stanza 1)

UMH 288

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

CCLI #3177994

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The Third Word:

"Dear woman, here is your son."

(John 19:26)

Reflection

As Jesus was dying, His mother was among those who had remained with Him. Most of the male disciples had fled, with the exception of one whom the Fourth Gospel calls "the disciple he loved" – most likely John.

Jesus was forging a relationship between this disciple and His mother, one in which the disciple would take care of Mary financially and in other ways. Jesus wanted to make sure she would be in good hands after His death.

The presence of Mary at the cross adds both humanity and horror to the scene. We are reminded that Jesus was a real human being, a man who had once been a boy who had once been carried in the womb of His mother. Even as He was dying on the cross as the Saviour of the world, Jesus was also a son, a role He did not neglect in His last moments.

When we think of the crucifixion of Jesus from the perspective of His mother, our horror increases dramatically. The death of a child is one of the most painful of all parental experiences. To watch one's beloved child experience the extreme torture of crucifixion must have been unimaginably terrible. We are reminded of the prophecy of Simeon shortly after Jesus' birth, when He said to Mary: "...a sword will pierce Your very soul."

This scene helps us not to sanitize or spiritualize the crucifixion of Jesus. He was a real man, true flesh and blood, a son of a mother, dying with unbearable agony. His suffering was altogether real, and He took it on for us.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does Mary's presence at the cross evoke in you?
2. Why do you think was it necessary for Jesus to suffer physical pain as He died?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, the presence of Your mother at the cross engages our hearts. You are no longer only the Saviour dying for the sins of the world. You are also a fully human man, a son with a mother.

O Lord, how can we begin to thank You for what You suffered? Our words fall short. Our thoughts seem superficial and vague. Nevertheless, we offer our sincere gratitude for Your suffering. Thank You for bearing our sin on the cross. We give You our praise, our love, our heart... all that we are, because You have given us all that You are.

All praise be to You, Lord Jesus, fully God and fully human, Saviour of the world... our Saviour! Amen.

The Fourth Word:

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

(Mark 15:34)

Reflection

As Jesus was dying on the cross, He echoed the beginning of Psalm 22, which reads:

*My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?
Why are you so far away when I groan for help?
Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer.
Every night you hear my voice, but I find no relief.*

In the words of the psalmist Jesus found a way to express the cry of His heart: Why had God abandoned Him? Why did His Father turn His back on Jesus in His moment of greatest agony?

This side of heaven, we will never fully know what Jesus was experiencing in this moment. What we do know is that Jesus entered into the Hell of separation from God. The Father abandoned Him because Jesus took upon Himself the penalty for our sins. In that excruciating moment, He experienced something far more horrible than physical pain. The beloved Son of God knew what it was like to be rejected by the Father. As we read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

Can we really grasp the mystery and the majesty of this truth? As Martin Luther once said “God forsaking God. Who can understand it?” Yet even a minimal grasp of this reality calls us to confession, to humility, to worship, to adoration.

Questions for Reflection

1. Take time to consider that Jesus was abandoned by the Father so that you might not be.
2. What does this “word” from the cross mean to you?

Prayer

O Lord Jesus, though we will never fully grasp the wonder and horror of Your abandonment by the Father, every time we hear this “word,” we are overwhelmed with gratitude. How can we ever thank You for what You suffered for us? What can we do but to offer ourselves to You in gratitude and praise? Thank You, dear Lord, for what You suffered. Thank You for taking our place. Thank You for being forsaken by the Father so that we might never be.

HYMN

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
(stanza 1)

UMH 286

O sacred Head, now wounded
With grief and shame weighed down
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown
How pale Thou art with anguish
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish
Which once was bright as morn!

CCLI #3983030

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded” words & music by

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Reflection

Jesus experienced extreme thirst while being crucified. He would have lost a substantial quantity of bodily fluid - both blood and sweat - through what He had endured even prior to crucifixion. Thus His statement, “I am thirsty” was a request for something to drink. In response the soldiers gave Jesus “sour wine”, a cheap beverage common among lower class people in the time of Jesus.

But when Jesus said “I am thirsty,” it was possibly not only a statement of physical reality, but also in order to fulfil Scripture from Psalm 69:20-21, which says:

*Their insults have broken my heart,
and I am in despair.
If only one person would show some pity;
if only one would turn and comfort me.
But instead, they give me poison for food;
they offer me sour wine for my thirst.*

As He suffered, Jesus embodied the pain of the people of Israel that which had been captured in the Psalms. Jesus was suffering for the sin of Israel, even as He was taking upon Himself the sin of the world.

As Jesus suffered thirst, we are reminded of our own thirst for the living water that Jesus supplies. We rejoice in the fact that He suffered physical thirst on the cross – and so much more – so that our thirst for the water of life might be quenched.

Questions for Reflection

1. How do you respond to Jesus’ statement “I am thirsty”?
2. What does this statement suggest to you about Jesus and about yourself?

Prayer

O Lord, once again, we thank You for what You suffered on the cross. Besides extraordinary pain, You also experienced extreme thirst. All of this was part and parcel of Your taking on our humanity so that You might take away our sin.

Dear Lord, in Your words “I am thirsty”, we hear the cry of our own heart. We too are thirsty, Lord, but not for physical drink. We need Your living water to flood our souls. We need to be refreshed by Your Spirit, to fill us once again.

We are thirsty, Lord, for You. Amen.

Reflection

When Jesus said “It is finished,” surely He was expressing relief that His suffering was over. “It is finished” meant, in part, “This is finally done!” But the Greek verb translated as “It is finished” (*tetelestai*) means more than just this. Eugene Peterson captures the full sense of the verb in his paraphrase of the Bible in *The Message*: “It is done . . . complete.” Jesus had accomplished His mission. He had announced and inaugurated the kingdom of God. He had revealed the love and grace of God. He had embodied that love and grace by dying for the sin of the world, thus opening up the way for all to live under the reign of God.

Because Jesus finished His work of salvation, we don’t need to add to it. In fact, we can’t. He accomplished what we never could, taking our sin upon Himself and giving us His life in return. Jesus finished that for which He had been sent, and we are the beneficiaries of His unique effort. Because of what He finished, we are never “finished.” We have hope for this life and for the next. We know that nothing can separate us from God’s love. One day what God has begun in us will also be finished, by His grace. Until that day, we live in the confidence of Jesus’ cry of victory: “It is finished!”

Questions for Reflection

1. Does your life reflect a living faith that Jesus has finished the work of your salvation?
2. Do you have confidence that God will finish that which He has begun in you?

Prayer

How can we ever find words to express our gratitude to You, dear Lord Jesus? You did it. You finished that for which You had been sent, faithful in life, faithful in death. You accomplished that which no other person could do, taking the sin of the world upon Your sinless shoulders . . . taking our sin so that we might receive Your forgiveness and new life.

All praise be to You, gracious Lord, for finishing the work of salvation. All praise be to You, dear Jesus, for saving us! Alleluia! Amen.

HYMN

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (*stanza 1 & 3*)

UMH 298

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride

See from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did ever such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown

CCLI #27893

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” words & music by Isaac Watts | Lowell Mason

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The Seventh Word:

“Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!”

(Luke 23:46)

Reflection

Two of the last seven “words” of Jesus were quotations from the Psalms. Earlier Jesus had Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?” to express His anguish. Later He borrowed from Psalm 31, which says “Father, I entrust my spirit into Your hands.”

On one hand, Jesus was putting His future in the hands of His Heavenly Father. It was as if He was saying, “Whatever happens to me after I die is Your responsibility, Father.”

But when we look carefully at the Psalm Jesus quoted, we see more than meets the eye. Psalm 31 begins with a cry for divine help:

*O LORD, I have come to You for protection;
don't let me be disgraced.
Save me, for you do what is right.*

But then it mixes asking for God’s deliverance with a confession of God’s strength and faithfulness:

*I entrust my spirit into your hand.
Rescue me, LORD, for you are a faithful God.*

By the end, Psalm 31 offers praise of God’s salvation:

*Praise the LORD,
for he has shown me the wonders of his unfailing love.
he kept me safe when my city was under attack.*

By quoting a portion of Psalm 31, Jesus not only entrusted His future to His Father, but also implied that He would be delivered and exonerated. No, God would not deliver Him from death by crucifixion. But beyond this horrific death lay something marvellous. “I entrust my spirit into Your hands” points back to the familiar suffering of David in Psalm 31, and forward to the resurrection.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you put your life and, indeed, your life beyond this life, in God’s hands?
2. How do you experience God’s salvation through Christ in your life today?

Prayer

Gracious Lord, even as You once entrusted Your spirit into the hands of the Father, so we give our lives to You. We trust You, and You alone to be our Saviour. We submit to Your sovereignty over our lives, and seek to live for Your glory alone. Here we are, Lord, available to You, both now and in the future.

How good it is to know, dear Lord, that the cross was not the end for You. As You entrusted Your spirit into the Father's hands, You did so in anticipation of what was to come. So we reflect upon Your death, not in despair, but in hope. With Good Friday behind us, Easter Sunday is on the horizon. Amen.

The Seven Last Words of Christ

Adapted from <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdroberts/>

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Your passion and death is the sacrifice that unites earth and heaven and reconciles all people to You. May we who have faithfully reflected on these mysteries follow in Your steps and so come to share Your glory in heaven where You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

(All depart in silence)

Tomorrow night's WORSHIP ENABLERS

| | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Liturgist | Rev Shearn Sya |
| Musician | Mr Daniel Khoo |
| Sound | Mr Tan Siew Jin |
| Visual | Mr Calvin Fong |
| Ushers | Dr Mah Chiou-Fen, Dr Goh Yoke Seng |

Easter Sunday's WORSHIP ENABLERS

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Sermon Title/Text | TBA |
| Preacher | Rev Shearn Sya |
| Worship Leaders | Mrs Jane Khoo, Mr Amos Lau, Ms Cheah Yan Li |
| Reader | Mr Ryan Loke |
| Musicians | Dr Melvin Saw, Ms Emily Tye Ms Adelya Yeoh, Mrs Nicoline Koay |
| Sound | Mr Jason Tham, Ms Roshni George |
| Visual | Mr Koay Choong Khai, Mr Calvin Fong |
| Ushers | Mr Cheong Kum Loong, Mr Khoo Boo Thye Mr Mak Ngai Leong, Mrs Maggie Mak |