

“Truly this was the Son of God”

Matthew 27:33-61

This Good Friday evening, we remember that dark day when the Savior of the world was nailed to a cross by the people He came to save. As we have said throughout this Lenten season, this was God’s plan. There were other people around taking part in the scene: a crowd of watchers – some of them hostile – the thief, the passers-by, chief priest, scribes, and elders mocking Him and hurling insults.

There were others who were waiting, hoping – the faithful women, the apostle John, Joseph of Arimathea, even the soldier, at the end, has to recognize the truth and says, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

The truth of this day is that everything which happened to Christ happened according to the will of His Father in heaven. We see throughout the Old Testament, God revealed His plan. David was told the plan. We read in Psalm 22, a band of evil men would surround him and they would pierce His hands and his feet. Isaiah was told the plan – the suffering servant will be “wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53). Isaiah also said, as we read earlier, “It was the will of the Lord to crush Him.”

With all of the mocking, spitting, beating, nailing, piercing . . . we must not forget that this was between God the Father and God the Son. The

Father's righteous wrath on the sin of the world had to be poured out. The Law demands that sin is punished and justice is carried out. The truth of God's Word must be upheld.

God the Father chose to send His Son to stand between us and the wrath of God's Law. He carried our sins. He carried our burdens. He took the full sting of death. He endured the abandonment of God's grace and favor – something no one else has ever had to endure on earth – to be utterly forsaken by God. That is a punishment only endured by those in hell. Christ endured it on the cross.

He endured death and hell so that you and I don't have to. He cries out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" The truth is, He was forsaken. He had become sin personified and God punished Him with the full portion of justice.

But the truth is, in those words, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" , which is the first verse of Psalm 22, once again, just like when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus is strengthened and comforted by the Word of God.

God's plan and the truth of His promise first made to Adam to send a Savior to free all of God's children from sin, death , and hell – it is treated with mockery and insults by the crowds. But the faithful few wait in hope. Creation itself trembles. God Himself has handed down the punishment for sin. The wages of sin is death. That is a truth that cannot be changed.

The faithful few wait in hope, but only the soldier opens his mouth and proclaims the truth, "Truly this was the Son of God." Amen.