

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin R. Eden

Good Friday
Friday, April 2, 2021
7:00 PM

“Mt. Calvary”

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. We have come to the last mountain in our Lenten journey. Tonight we see the fulfillment of God’s plan to save His people. On all of the other mountains we have witnessed in our Lenten journey, they all had us looking forward to tonight – to Mt. Calvary. The other mountains left us incomplete and in need of victory over the enemies of sin, death, and Satan.

Of all the mountains we have seen, Mt. Calvary would be the least impressive as far as we normally judge mountains. No one knows which hill along a roadside just outside the city was the exact spot of the crucifixion. There are two sites traditionally suggested to be the place. But the importance of Mt Calvary is not about the size or place of the “mountain.”

Mt. Calvary is associated with death – and rightly so. However, we come together and commemorate the events of that place each year because of life. He who is the Resurrection and Life lays down his life for the sake of all life.

There were other people at Mt. Calvary taking part in the scene: a crowd of watchers – some of them hostile – the mocking thief, the passers-by, chief priests, scribes, and elders mocking Him and hurling insults.

There were others who were waiting, hoping – the faithful women, the apostle John, the other thief, 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 leading up to and on Mt. Calvary happened according to the will of His Father in heaven – we focused on that last night as we witnessed God’s plan being carried out in the events happening on Mount Olivet.

Throughout the ages, God had been revealing His plan first told to Adam and Eve, that the “Seed of the woman,” the Second Adam would crush the head of Satan. David was told the plan – a band of evil men would surround Him and they would pierce His hands and his feet (Psalm 22). 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 what happened on Mt. Calvary 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 here on earth– to be utterly forsaken by God. That is a punishment only endured by those in hell. Christ endured it on the cross at Calvary.

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 on Mt. Calvary opens his mouth and proclaims the truth, “Truly this was the Son of God.” Amen.