

Holy Saturday

Reading: Matthew 27:62-66

Introduction:

Its all over! Jesus having triumphantly shouted, "It is finished", commits his Spirit into the hands of His Father and died.

It was approaching the time of the festival. A request was submitted to Pilate for the legs of those crucified to be broken, to bring on death quickly for the crucified men. It could take many days for those crucified to die and no one wants to hear agonising screams and cursing from dying men as visitors to Jerusalem pass by tented the city to attend the festivities. So the order was given that the legs be broken and the bodies removed.

The legs of the two thieves were smashed, but when they came to Jesus they discovered he was already dead. Executioners are proficient, to ensure Jesus hadn't simply passed out, the centurion thrust his spear into Jesus side, piercing Jesus heart and lungs. Blood and water poured out of the gaping gash, confirming he was indeed dead. (John 19:34). The Lamb of God sacrificed and none of his bones would be or were broken.

You would think the conspirators would be satisfied that Jesus was dead, silenced - forever. After all of the planning, plotting and murderous scheming they had finally succeeded. Not only was this menace dead, but also discredited him as the Messiah. The scriptures are clear, only a person cursed hangs from a tree. (Deuteronomy 21:23). This could not be the Messiah as he was hanging cursed from a tree.

With all of this however, they are still not satisfied. They remain nervous and uneasy even though they know Jesus is dead, they want to ensure that no one takes the body claiming he has risen.

So the Pharisees go to Pilate requesting the tomb of Jesus be sealed and guarded. The Pharisees explained how Jesus said he would rise again three days after his death. (John 2:19-21).

No one believed he would rise again, but they were concerned the disciples may steal his body and make this claim and deceive the crowds who thought he was the Messiah. Pilate agrees and orders the tomb be made secure and appoints a soldier to guard the tomb.

The disciples are by now keeping a low profile, confused, grief stricken, ashamed and afraid. They have locked themselves away in their homes for fear of the Jews. They have lost their dearest friend and this was the end of all their hopes and dreams. The dreams of the kingdom coming were laying in tatters, shattered and broken. Had all of this simply been an illusion. How could a tree be our friends final curse, how could nails hold him prisoner when he set so many free, how can a stone tomb be his burial place when he raised others from their tomb!

This Holy Saturday feels very poignant. Not in over two millennia has Holy Saturday saw so many Christians living behind closed doors of their homes, locked away, living in a lockdown. But the scriptures give us a word to hold on to in these times for the Psalmist writes,

Weeping may stay the night, but joy comes in the morning. Psalm 30:

Jesus taught....

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. What an amazing thought.

Remember its always darkest before it gets light. Weeping may stay the night but joy comes in the morning, the pure of heart will see God.

Hold on,

Don't ever give up.

Never lose hope

Give thanks to God in all situations

Even when all looks lost and we feel at our weakest and defeated, the light is about to shine when the dawn comes, for a new day will come, filled with awe and wonder.

With a joy and a confidence given to God's holy people we are blessed to be standing on a mighty rock and we shall never be moved.

Holy Saturday may be quiet and sombre - However, hope is just around the corner.

P.S

We have just been singing Amazing Grace on the steps of the church as a way of marking Good Friday 3:00 when Jesus died. Looking forward to gathering with you all again soon.

God bless.

Rev. Ken

Ambassador of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:20