Good Friday Worship

10th April 2020

Trinity Church Gosforth

Suggested songs:

Come and see (STF 270)

Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice *Thank you for the cross* **(STF 274)**

My song is love unknown (STF 277)

When I survey the wondrous cross (STF 287)

There is a redeemer (STF 338)

There is a higher throne (STF 337

Seven candles are lit in preparation for the service.

Along this way
We have walked with Christ.

Along this way
We have shared his table.

Along this way
He has washed our feet.

Along this way
We approach the cross.

Along this way
We fear the path.

Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Introduction and prayer:
On this day we recall the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. As we hear John's account, we focus on seven moments during that day and, as darkness still seeks to conquer the light, pause to reflect on our own sin, and that of the world.

At the end of each reading we will keep silence as a candle is extinguished to mark the prevailing darkness of this day.

Let us pray:
God of the daytime and the night-time,
God of light and darkness,

God of joy and sorrow,
we worship you.
Through you alone are we able to know that
even in the darkest hours
hope is present through Jesus Christ,
our Saviour. Amen

1ST MOMENT: 'ECCE HOMO'

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face. Pilate went out again and said to them, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.' So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.' The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.' John 19:1–7 (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 1st candle is extinguished. Silence

2ND MOMENT: GABBATHA

Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, ‘Where are you from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, ‘Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?’ Jesus answered him, ‘You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.’ From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, ‘If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor.’

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called the Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, ‘Here is your King!’ They cried out, ‘Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!’ Pilate asked them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but the emperor.’ Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. John 19:8–16a (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 2nd candle is extinguished. Silence

<u>3RD MOMENT: GOLGOTHA</u>

So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews", but, "This man said, I am King of the Jews."' Pilate answered, 'What I have written I have written.' John 19:16b–22 (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 3rd candle is extinguished. Silence

4TH MOMENT: CASTING LOTS

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfil what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.' And that is what the soldiers did. John 19:23–25 (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 4th candle is extinguished. Silence

5TH MOMENT: 'HERE IS YOUR MOTHER'

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. John 19:25–27 (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 5th candle is extinguished. Silence

6TH MOMENT: FINISHED

After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfil the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:28–30 (NRSV)

We pray:

Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.

The 6th candle is extinguished. Silence

7TH MOMENT: PIERCED

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. John 19:31–34 (NRSV)

We pray:
Lord, have mercy,
Christ, have mercy,
Lord, have mercy.
Amen

The 7th candle is extinguished. Silence

Reflection

So we come to Good Friday, we have looked at some of the moments from the cross, the last moment included those words of Jesus “It is finished” – a cry of accomplishment, victory.

I want to add one more of the words from the cross. I think it is so important to hear especially this year, but any year really.

A long time ago I was preaching in a chapel in the Staffordshire Moorlands, it was a Sunday evening and afterwards one of the congregation, who wasn't a regular came up to me and asked me something. This is the moment when occasionally your ego can get stoked up a bit! – not this time!!

He said why do they write that up there? Pointing up to the beautifully painted text behind the central pulpit. It said "**We preach Christ crucified**" – a text of course from 1 Corinthians 1:23. I gave some answer which was ok, but what a gift of a question – if he had given me a bit of time to prepare an answer!
Because of course Paul goes on to say "**a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.**"

What that gentleman really wanted to know was why did we not just preach Christ risen from the dead – which we do preach of course as well!

As we come to this day this is an important question, along with Why do we call this **Good** Friday.

There is something really crucial about today that if we just skip from last Sunday to Easter Day we miss at our peril. The God who comes in the flesh in Jesus Christ we proclaim as messiah on Palm Sunday and we proclaim as risen from the dead on Easter Day.

Part of what is happening today though, is critical if we are to celebrate the truth of God among us. The risen Christ is not some triumphal figure who is out there and totally removed from the everyday. A little like the celebrity figures who draw great crowds, yet are unreachable.

The Christ who we will celebrate as risen is here during the week "one of us". Why Easter day is so phenomenal is that the gap between life and life through death has been bridged, the gap between deity and broken humanity has been obliterated.

If we just preached Christ risen, it would be a so what moment – a moment in history to remember, but what is the connection with me? Ocassionally on Easter Day I have looked out at a congregation and thought some of you don't get the enormity of what we are celebrating, but then I have so often missed the full significance and raw power of that wonderful truth.

In the events of holy Week we find the fullness of the humanness, as well as the divineness of Christ present throughout the week.
So to the words I want to look at:
"***45*** *From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.* ***46*** *And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matt 27)

Sometimes called the cry of dereliction. This is a cry that reveals something of the depths of the love of God for

his creation as revealed through Jesus. You find yourself in a bad place? Jesus has been there, but this is not just the human Jesus, this is the fully God fully Human Jesus who is in that place, later on Easter Day, that will still be the fully God, crucified Jesus who is raised.

There is a very moving moment in the film and book "The Shack" where the guy Mack is having a conversation with the God The Father about how he abandoned Jesus on the cross and at that moment Mack looks down and sees the same scars on the Father as are on the Son, Jesus. – now that is just a story, but here we have Jesus crying out "Why…."

So has he been abandoned? I don't believe so – and this is really important – The Psalms are often written to express things that are experienced and felt, but not always reality. At that moment Jesus – fully divine and fully human feels forsaken, abandoned. Yet at the same time he quotes from Psalm 22 which goes onto to proclaim triumph and such a confidence in the God who has been revealed to them.

What a paradox – to feel abandoned, yet believe in a God who will never leave us or forsake us. That is the same Jesus who will triumph on Easter Day as he is raised from the dead.

The forsaken-ness cannot mean, for example, that the eternal communion between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit was broken. God could not cease to be a trinity.

Neither could it mean that the Father ceased to love the Son, that would be a contradiction in God's nature

Nor again could it mean that the Holy Spirit had ceased to minister to the Son. He had come down upon him at his baptism not merely for one fleeting moment, but to remain on him (John. 1:32)

And, finally, the words are not a cry of despair, even in the darkness God was, '*My* God', and though there was no sign of him, and though the pain obscured the promises, somewhere in the depths of his soul there remained the assurance that God was holding him.

You know Christian Faith is a truth that is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, yet to us it is the power and wisdom of God. At the very moment where the world says it is finished – with a cry of despair, faith says even in my despair I look to you as my source of salvation and my hope.

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Prayers:
Let us pray.
We pray for those for whom the terrifying has become the ordinary:
for the victims of warfare;
for children, mothers and fathers unable to live in homes that are their own.

Silence

Lord of the cross,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for ourselves, if we have become immune to those who suffer,
who have no name, who count for little.
We ask for forgiveness for those times when we failed to speak or act.

Silence

Lord of the cross,
hear our prayer.

We give thanks for those who remind us that
even in the shadows of pain
humanity may shine forth.
For NHS staff, shop workers, emergency services,
refuse collectors, delivery drivers
and the many more unnamed.

We give thanks for those who care for the dead and the dying,
for those who bring hope.

Silence

Lord of the cross,
hear our prayer.

Lord of the cross,
in you alone do we find our hope,
even when hope is gone.
Amen

<u>A closing reading:</u>
After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his

fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. John 19:38–42 (NRSV)

Final prayer and departure:

When hope has left
Still we watch and wait.

When darkness prevails
Still we search for light.

When the road is hidden
Still we seek a guide.

Christ of the cross,
hold us in these moments
as we wait for a garden vision,
a mealtime revelation,
a locked room blessing,
and a lakeside renewal.
We go in peace.