

Our Text is from Mark's account of the death of Jesus: Mark 15: 25-30; 33-39
AND IT WAS THE THIRD HOUR, AND THEY CRUCIFIED HIM. AND
THERE WAS A PLACARDED INSCRIPTION OF THE CHARGE AGAINST
HIM WRITTEN: *THE KING OF THE JEWS*. AND WITH HIM THEY
CRUCIFY TWO BANDIT, ONE ON HIS RIGHT, AND ONE ON HIS LEFT.
AND THOSE WHO WRE GOING BY BEGAN TO BLASPHEME HIM,
SHAKING THEIR HEADS AND SAYING: *WHOA! THE ONE WHO IS GOING
TO TEAR DOWN THE TEMPLE SANCTUARY AND BUILD IT IN THREE DAYS!
SAVE YOUR SELF BY DISMOUNTING FROM THE CROSS!....*

AND WHEN THE SIXTH HOUR HAD COME, DARKNESS FELL OVER THE
LAND. AND IN THE NINTH HOUR, JESUS SHOUTED OUT WITH A LOUD
VOICE:

ELOI, ELOI, LEMA SABACHTHANI! WHICH IS INTERPRETED, "MY
GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"

AND SOME OF THOSE STANDING BY, UPON HEARING IT, PROCEEDED
TO SAY, *SEE! HE IS CALLING ELIJAH!* AND SOMEONE RAN, FILLED A
SPONGE WITH SHARP DDRINK, PUT IT AROUND A STICK, AND
PROCEEDED TO GIVE HIM TO DRINK, SAYING, "*LET US SEE IF ELIJAH
IS GOING TO COME TO TAKE HIM DOWN!*" AND JESUS, UPON SENDING
OUT A GREAT SOUND, EX-SPIRED.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Just what was going on earlier today, with Jesus on the Roman cross? Well, something **unusual**, because **darkness** had come over the whole land. In fact, this *something unusual* turns out to be something **pretty awesome**. And the prophet Amos tells us what that awesome thing is. He says, in describing what would happen **when God would come in a special way in response to sin** (Amos 8:9):

AND ON THAT DAY, *DECLARES THE LORD GOD*, I WILL MAKE
THE SUN TO GO DOWN AT NOON AND DARKEN THE EARTH IN
BROAD DAYLIGHT.

Divine judgment is happening here.

This is clear when we consider Jesus's shout, which is a quotation of the first verse of Psalm 22, uttered by David when he was in distress: MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? Indeed, the prophet Isaiah makes plain that in this context our Lord's shout means that **God is meting out judgment—special judgment—upon human sin**. Isaiah says regarding sin in chapter 59, verse 2:

BUT YOUR INIQUITIES ARE THE THINGS MAKING A SEPARATION
BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR GOD, AND YOUR SINS *HIDE HIS FACE*
FROM YOU, PREVENTING HIM FROM HEARING-----to which his

people reply (Is. 64:7): FOR YOU HAVE HIDDEN YOUR FACE FROM US,
AND YOU HAVE CONSUMED US BY THE HAND OF OUR INIQUITIES.

THIS is what our Lord was undergoing on the cross: **separation from God because of sin, with the Father hiding his face and consuming his Son because of iniquity—his Son, who was experiencing the full effects of sin.** But not his sin or his iniquity. No, it was *our* iniquity, *our* sin, *our* rebellion against God that was receiving judgment on that cross. In the words, again, of Isaiah, as he describes the Suffering Servant in his chapter 53, who was spat upon, humiliated, mocked, and killed—that is to say, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who was spat upon, humiliated, mocked and killed: THE LORD HAS LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL (Is. 53:6).

Let us put this another *way*, a very Marcan and OT-like way. **What Jesus was experiencing on the cross was the *CUP* that he had talked about several times in the days before Good Friday.** In chapter 10 of Mark, after the disciples James and John request that he do for them what they ask—what turns out to be a request to sit one on the right and one on the left in Jesus’s glory—Jesus says: ARE YOU ABLE TO DRINK THE CUP THAT I AM GOING TO DRINK? The cup that Jesus is referencing is a well-known OT image for *one’s lot in life*, as in Ps 16:5: THE LORD IS THE PORTION OF MY INHERITANCE AND MY CUP. This is the level at which James and John were asking and the level at which Jesus

gave his answer to them. They would drink of the cup of rejection, shame, humiliation, and death—the cup that was Jesus’s destiny as he promised in his 3 predictions of his Passion. But in Jesus case, an additional, more specific, well-known image or nuance also was in play, namely, the **allotment of God’s judgment against sin**, as in Ps. 75:7-8: BUT IT IS GOD WHO EXECUTES JUDGMENT...FOR IN THE HAND OF THE LORD THERE IS A CUP WITH FOAMING WINE, WELL MIXED, AND HE POURS OUT FROM IT, AND ALL THE WICKED OF THE EARTH SHALL DRAIN IT DOWN TO THE DREGS.

This is the meaning of the “cup” that we see in the Garden of Gethsemane—after our Lord instituted the *Last Supper* less than a day before he was nailed to the cross—when Jesus asked his Father if he would TAKE THIS CUP FROM (HIM), though he was always willing to do his Father’s will. **This cup is the experience of God’s wrath against human sin, so that drinking such a cup entails enduing horrific divine judgment**, as it overwhelms the sinner. On the cross on Good Friday, Jesus drank that cup—that cup of God’s full wrath—the **full allotment** of God’s **full judgment** upon sin, as/because, in Isaiah’s words, THE LORD HAS LAID UPON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL.

Indeed, this is what Jesus was referring to in so many words a few verses after this conversation with the two disciples, when he said: THE SON OF MAN CAME, NOT TO BE SERVED BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE AS

AN ATONEMENT—AN A STAND IN TO TAKE ANOTHER’S
PUNISHMENT—FOR MANY/MULTITUDES (Mark 10:45). And this is why
this day is called *Good Friday*: *not* because it was a *good* day for *him*//for him it
was an awful day. But because it was a *very good day for us*, whose sins have now
been expunged.

Just one more thing, and it concerns that question of James and John about
sitting one on Jesus’s right and one on his left in their Lord’s glory. After Jesus
asks them about drinking the cup that he will drink, he declares to both of them:
BUT TO SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND AND ON MY LEFT IS NOT MINE TO
GIVE, BUT IT IS FOR THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS ALREADY PREPARED
(Mark 10:40). To what is our Lord referring with these words? As Pastor Punke
indicated to us two Sundays ago in his sermon, Mark himself tells us, when he
describes what happens during the crucifixion of our Lord (Mark 15:27):

AND WITH HIM THEY CRUCIFY TWO BANDITS, ONE ON HIS
RIGHT AND ONE ON HIS LEFT.

HERE is Jesus’s glory—Jesus sitting on his cross. And, yes, the Roman crosses
had a small seat—a *sedila*—on them, upon which the condemned man could rest,
to prolong the horrid agony of his death. (Crucified people sometimes lived for

weeks after being crucified.) And those Good Friday seats on Jesus's right and on his left are destined for, and filled by, the two bandits on either side.

This is fascinating enough—but the point that I would make is that **the crucifixion is our Lord's glory**, in the full OT sense. Glory is not simply magnificence, as we see at Jesus's Transfiguration. No, in the Hebrew, **glory** is what **reveals** a person **for who he truly is**. And in Jesus's case, that is accomplished in his crucifixion. In this heinous act, during which our Lord took upon himself the iniquities of us all, during which our Lord became the atonement—the stand-in, to receive the punishment for multitudes, **our God is seen for who he truly is**. A *just* God, yes, but much more, a merciful, saving God, a God who, himself, in the person of his Son, bears the punishment that we should bear, a God whose mercy far outstrips any judgment that he may render.

Do you want to see the very heart of God on this Good Friday night? Mark shows us that very heart—God's glory. Look at our Savior seated on the cross for *your* sins, for *my* sins, and for the sins *of the whole world*. Here you see God for who he truly is.

Amen.

Good Friday, March 29, 2024, Zion Lutheran Church, Ft. Wayne, IN