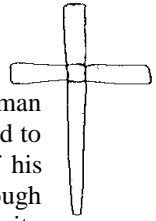


Sunday 5th April 2020 Palm Sunday **Red**



Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 50:4-9A English Standard Version (ESV)

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience

50 ⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. ⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. ⁶I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. ⁷But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. ⁸He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. ⁹Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty?

COMMENT: The unnamed prophet of Israel's Babylonian exile whose poetry is included in Isaiah 40-55 describes the response of persecuted people to their suffering. The longer poem (vss.1-11), from which this reading is an excerpt, portrays the exile as the result of the nation's sin against God (vs.1). The prophet-poet uses this reflection as a teaching moment. Though written in the 6th century BC, the poem was seen by the early Christian church as a prophecy of Jesus' wholly unjust trial and execution.

Luke 23:1-49 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Before Pilate

23 ¹Then the whole company of them arose and brought him before Pilate. ²And they began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king."³ And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so."⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man."⁵ But they were urgent, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee even to this place."

Jesus Before Herod

⁶When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. ⁷And when he learned that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him over to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. ⁸When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had long desired to see him, because he had heard about him, and he was hoping to

see some sign done by him. ⁹ So he questioned him at some length, but he made no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. ¹² And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other. ¹³ Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Look, nothing deserving death has been done by him. ¹⁶ I will therefore punish and release him.”^[a]

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

¹⁸ But they all cried out together, “Away with this man, and release to us Barabbas”— ¹⁹ a man who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection started in the city and for murder. ²⁰ Pilate addressed them once more, desiring to release Jesus, ²¹ but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” ²² A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no guilt deserving death. I will therefore punish and release him.” ²³ But they were urgent, demanding with loud cries that he should be crucified. And their voices prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will.

The Crucifixion

²⁶ And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. ²⁷ And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. ²⁸ But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ ³¹ For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” ³² Two others, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. ³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”^[b] And they cast lots to divide his garments. ³⁵ And the people stood by, watching, but the rulers scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!” ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” ³⁸ There was also an inscription over him,^[c] “This is the King of the Jews.” ³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him,^[d] saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” ⁴⁰ But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? ⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” ⁴² And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” ⁴³ And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour,^[e] and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour,^[f] ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things.

Footnotes: a. Here, or after verse 19, some manuscripts add verse 17: *Now he was obliged to release one man to them at the festival.* b. Some manuscripts omit the sentence *And Jesus... what they do.* c. Some manuscripts add *in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew.* d. or *blasphemed him.* e. That is, noon. f. That is, 3 p.m.

COMMENT: Palm Sunday is the gateway to Holy Week. It is appropriate that both Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the full account of Christ's passion, death, and burial be commemorated in order to prepare ourselves for the days to follow. The passage was written so we can enter into the story of our faith to know Jesus was indeed the innocent victim, a sacrifice to stand in our stead, paying the price for our sins.

Psalm 31: 10-19 *Miserere Mei* Grail Psalter

✠ Have mercy on me O Lord.

¹⁰ Have mercy on me, O Lord,
for I am in distress.
Tears have wasted my eyes,
my throat and my heart. ✠

¹¹ For my life is spent with sorrow
and my years with sighs.
Affliction has broken down my strength
and my bones waste away. ✠

¹² In the face of all my foes
I am a reproach,
an object of scorn to my neighbours
and of fear to my friends. ✠

Those who see me in the street
run far away from me.

¹³ I am like a dead man, forgotten,
like a thing thrown away. ✠

¹⁴ I have heard the slander of the crowd,
fear is all around me,
as they plot together against me,
as they plan to take my life. ✠

¹⁵ But as for me, I trust in you, Lord;
I say: “You are my God.

¹⁶ My life is in your hands, deliver me
from the hands of those who hate me.

✠ Have mercy on me O Lord.

¹⁷ Let your face shine on your servant.
Save me in your love.

¹⁸ Let me not be put to shame for I call you,
let the wicked be shamed! **✠**

Let them be silenced in the grave,

¹⁹ let lying lips be dumb,
that speak haughtily against the just
with pride and contempt.” **✠**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: Again the Christian church has interpreted this psalm with reference to the Passion of Christ. Originally it was a lament and plea for God’s protection from persecution by false accusers. Though not in this reading, verse 5 of this psalm was uttered by Jesus on the cross: “Into your hands I commit my spirit.” (Luke 23:46)

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks because, for our salvation, he was obedient even to death on the cross. The tree of shame was made the tree of glory; and where life was lost, there life has been restored.

Post Communion

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Blessing of the Palms.

Almighty and Loving God, we give you our thanks and praise for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through Christ Jesus our Saviour. The Hebrews acclaimed Jesus as the Messiah and King with palm branches in their hands, crying “Hosanna in the highest”. We pray you, O Lord, that you may bless these branches and make them holy. May we also, carrying them forth from this place and crying out “Hosanna in the Highest” and “Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord”, acclaim Jesus as our Messiah and King and follow Him in the way that leads to eternal life. **Amen.**

Blessing

Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**