

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Good Friday: Tenebrae

Pastor Randy Ott

God foretold Good Friday in detail through his prophets:

Tenebrae means darkness. The Tenebrae Service is the service of darkness where we use light to symbolize the approaching moment of Christ's death and also light to remind us that the tomb was not the end for Christ but that he rose again on that first Easter morning. For us it is a time when we reflect upon our sin and the amazing love of our Savior. We think of the time that Christ spent on the cross—six hours, on a Friday—but as we see this evening as we consider these selections from God's Word, everything that was connected with our Savior's death was known by him from all eternity. I think that is a statement that is very hard for our sinful human minds to grasp.

We have talked about this in Bible studies within the last few months. If you knew the future and knew how you would die and when you would die, would you like that? Would you like to know that you would die in a car crash on a certain day? Would that, humanly speaking, drive you crazy as the day approached closer and closer?

From all eternity, Jesus knew every facet of what his suffering and death would be like and what he would have to endure simply because you and I are sinners who cannot approach him without him coming to us first.

This evening we will use one of the many prophecies in the Old Testament that foretold our Savior's suffering and death. We will focus especially on Psalm 22—the Good Friday Psalm—and see the details that were there just in this one Psalm. This morning we heard some of the other details that were in Isaiah and I'm sure you know others from Scripture, but we will see the facets of what Jesus had to endure as we consider the time that he spent on the cross as we read it from the Gospel writers. As we consider it, ponder the truth of how much your Savior must have loved you and that from all eternity he knew that he was going to go through every one of these things to take away your sins.

God foretold that the Savior would be scorned and despised:

If as a child you ever played in a game at recess where they chose teams one by one with two captains picking people, sometime or other you probably felt the sting of not getting picked where you thought you ought to have been picked. You might have felt rejected and hurt and when you played, you probably wanted to get back at the one that didn't pick you, right?

Think about it today if it came down to you or Osama Bin Laden being put to death by our government. You would think you would stand a fairly safe chance of not being chosen, right? But from all eternity our Savior knew that he would be rejected and

scorned and that instead of him the people would choose a murderer to be set free. Such was their hate and their disdain for him from the very people that he was dying for. We see that prophecy and fulfillment in Psalm 22:6 and then in John 19.

Psalm 22:6 - I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

John 19:4-6,15-16 - Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him."

But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

God foretold that the Savior would be mocked and insulted:

Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me—the only time you ever said that in your life was when words hurt you, right? Words have a power that hurt us. In fact, the last time you were cut to the quick it probably wasn't by someone's fist or bodily blow. It was probably words that someone said that cut you to the heart and hurt you. You might still have some words that were spoken to you that hurt that can echo in your mind and pop in every now and then in a quiet moment. The words come echoing back and the hurt comes back.

Can you imagine from all eternity having the words echo in Christ of the mocking and the insults and the jeering and the taunting of those he came to save? A thousand years before it happened we read David speaking of it. And our Savior certainly knew it long before that.

God foretold that the Savior would be mocked and insulted as we see in Psalm 22:7-8 and Matthew 27.

Psalm 22:7-8 – All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."

Matthew 27:27-31,41-44 - Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the King of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.' " In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

God foretold that the Savior would be surrounded and pierced:

When we have those days where it feels like everything in the world is going against us and nothing goes right, quite often when we sit down at the end of the day and put our feet up, we can demonstrate a lot of love—love for ourselves that shows itself in pity. Woe is us. Life is unfair. But when the entire world was actually and absolutely against Christ, he demonstrated love that wasn't pity, but a love that focused on you and me and every other sinner in the world that kept him to that cross so that he might pay for our sins even though, as God had foretold, our Savior was surrounded and pierced. We read Psalm 22:16-18 and Matthew 27:35-40.

Psalm 22:16-18 - Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.

Matthew 27:35-40 - When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"

God foretold that the Savior would be poured out like water:

Perhaps the aspect of the death of Christ that horrifies us the most is the physical suffering that he endured; probably because that is something that we can relate to. And yet, I can't. I can never understand just how much pain and physical suffering he went through. From all eternity he knew he would do it because he loves us. We see that God foretold the Savior would be poured out like water in Psalm 22:14-15, and we see its fulfillment in John 19.

Psalm 22:14-15 - I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.

John 19:28-29 - Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips.

God foretold that the Savior would be forsaken:

We may be able to relate to Christ's physical suffering to some certain degree, but God forsaking God, that is beyond my grasp. But God forsook God. Christ was left alone on the cross with nothing but the wrath of God against our sins and darkness as the tangible evidence that God's presence had been taken from him. Jesus enduring the very agony of hell is far and away the greatest suffering that he had to endure and from all eternity he knew it was there. We can see clearly David spoke of it in Psalm 22 and we see God forsake God in Matthew 27.

Psalm 22:1 - My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning?

Matthew 27:45-46 - From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

God foretold that the Savior would die confident of life:

This morning at the Cross of Christ Service we gathered together and focused on the nature of Jesus' trust as he spoke a word of trust in the Father. And that trust in the Father—that the Father would deliver him even through all of this suffering and all of this torment and through hell itself—was what Jesus, no doubt, focused upon so that he could die confident of life.

We see that foretold this evening in our Psalm reading and in Luke 23, and we also remind ourselves visually of the confidence of life—after the sixth candle has been extinguished and after the seventh candle has been taken from the chancel to mark the time of Christ's death, the service ends with a loud noise that represents the tomb opening. The candle comes back, and we know that our Savior lives. So even on this Good Friday, we worship our Lord confident of life. We are forgiven in Christ.

Psalm 22:19-24 - But you, O LORD, be not far off; O my Strength, come quickly to help me. Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen. I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you. You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

Luke 23:44-46 - It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.