



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 18, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

Good Friday: Rite of Nails & Hymns

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

The Suffering Servant: [Isaiah 53](#)

We look at Isaiah. It's a magnificent book that is so filled with Gospel in the Old Testament. There are very few places that have so much Gospel. As we just read about the confusion of the cross, this section of Isaiah is often skipped over by Jewish scholars, by the Jewish religion because it creates huge confusion. The Messiah was supposed to be this conquering king, this one who was supposed to bring in an army and kick out the foreign rulers and bring back this earthly rule. That's what they heard and there were prophecies about this great king, but also that He would be, what we see in Chapter 53, a Suffering Servant. How did those two things go together? How could there be a king, one who is so great and mighty, but then one who is going to suffer, to suffer so greatly? Those things don't make sense unless you see Jesus—unless you see Jesus riding in on a donkey with praises of hosanna in the highest. He is the Son of David. But then just a few days later He is put on the cross. The cross is that confusion. The cross is where we see Him win the victory, but as a Suffering Servant.

One of my favorite things we would do in China as we were teaching people about the Bible, about the Gospel, is I would take this section and I would take away all of the markings of Isaiah or the chapter numbers, and then I would ask people, "Where is this found?" When you read this, it's one of the clearest and best pictures of what happens to Jesus on the cross, but it was written hundreds and hundreds of years before Jesus came and lived and died. But we see this perfect picture of what Jesus does, taking on our sins. We are going to read: ***He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

What great peace and message to see that our sins were put on Christ and to see what He gives us—that Great Exchange where we put all our sins on Him and He gives us peace and forgiveness. This was prophesied and spoken about so clearly hundreds and hundreds of years before He lived and died. What an amazing God we have and what an amazing Savior we have.

M: Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

C: **He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.**

M: He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

C: **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.**

M: But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

C: **We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

M: He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

C: **By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.**

M: He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

C: **Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.**

M: After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied ; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

C: **Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

It is Finished: [John 19:28-30](#)

We will focus on the words from John 19, where Jesus says ***"It is finished."***

When you look at this world and celebrities or just every one of us, it's always good to think about what you are striving for. Who do you want to be? What do you want to become? When is it finished? Two of the most interesting quotes on this come from some of the most famous, most successful people in their areas.

Tom Brady, after he had won several Super Bowls and he was married to a super model, he was interviewed and he said, "There has to be something more than this." He wasn't satisfied even though it seemed like he had everything. If you see him still today, he won more Super Bowls than anyone and he is still striving. He has to show that he is now the best broadcaster around. He is striving and striving to do more.

The other famous quote on this is from Madonna. After the peak of all her #1 hits, she was interviewed and asked, "What drives you?" She said, "I feel like I need to be

somebody.” She is already one of the most famous celebrities and one of the most successful musicians ever, but every morning she wakes up and she doesn’t feel like she is someone, so she has to strive and strive and strive.

What does that create in someone? We can see what that does in celebrities, but what about us? Do we strive and strive to be something, to be more, to be something before God, to be something in front of others? But we know that all fall short. We know that as soon as you accomplish one thing, as soon as you do that great thing, that’s great, you achieved it, but now what? What is next? There is that letdown almost of achievement. “I’ve achieved this, and now what?”

If we make it all about us and our achievements and what we do, we are never going to be satisfied. So it goes with our good works and striving before God. We have to see that we have to put it all in God’s hands—in the hands of our Lord, who says ***“It is finished.”*** The work of our salvation is done. Your identity is one of a redeemed child of God. You are forgiven. Yes, you can work hard and you can be faithful. God has given you talents and gifts. But stop striving to be someone and having to prove who you are because you are redeemed. You are forgiven. And you are never going to make your way up in the way that the world thinks they can.

This doesn’t mean to not be faithful. This doesn’t mean we can’t use God’s gifts. But when it comes to our righteousness, it is truly finished. God did the work for you and me by sending Jesus to be the Savior, and He lived perfectly for you, every minute, every hour, as He became man and submitted Himself under the Law and then suffered the most humiliating death on a cross. But as He is there, He says the one word in Greek—***“Tetelestai.”*** It’s that beautiful word that gives us so much hope and so much forgiveness—***“It is finished.”*** Your sins are forgiven. Amen.

²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Christ’s Wondrous Love: [2 Corinthians 5:14-21](#)

We look at the wondrous cross, and we see that we view things in a different way than the rest of the world. The world looks at Christ and Christianity and they kind of mock us. It’s the same thing that people did to Jesus when He was on the cross. “If you’re the Son of Man, come down! You can save others, can’t you save yourself?”

We think of Jesus and His mighty power and people think, this is the stumbling block that so many people have, *how could the God, the Creator of all, this amazing Man, how could He die on the cross? Either He wasn’t true God or He is not that special if He*

could die. So people get confused. Other religions really struggle with this concept. And then other people like to just completely skip over the meaning of Good Friday and the cross. When they look at Christianity, they look at all the laws and the people and they'll point out how we are hypocrites. We don't do all the things that we say we do. We fall short. This is true. But what is Christianity all about? It's about Christ and His great love for us on the cross. This is what we want to portray over and over again.

I heard this recently and I was asked this question again yesterday. I should have given a better answer. I didn't give an answer. They asked what my favorite holiday was and I heard another pastor say "Good Friday." I thought that was a great answer because his answer said it's the only holiday that can't really be corrupted by the world. If you look at Christmas or Easter, the confusion of the Easter Bunny, the confusion of Christmas and Santa Claus, but the world is not high jacking Good Friday because it's about the sacrifice that God made for you and for me and for the whole world. Maybe we should push Good Friday out to the world more and more so that they can understand what Christianity is all about.

Christianity is not about us being as perfect as we can or trying to get as many people as righteous as they can. Yes, we don't want people to fall into sin. Christianity is about showing this truth about Jesus—that one died for all, that He gave Himself up for us. He sacrificed Himself. Christianity is about sacrifice, denying ourselves, denying what we think and what we want, to understand what Jesus is and not what the world says, but most of all about the sacrifice of Jesus.

We read these words from 2 Corinthians and we see the end of it, because this is what we are all about—it's this plea. Jesus is not a myth. He's not the Easter Bunny. He's not Santa Claus. He is someone who came in reality and really suffered and really died. The facts are true that He died for the sins of the world. God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

What is the imploring at the end? ***We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*** It's a plea. It's this good news that we go out and say it's true that Jesus died. Believe it because it's for you. And regardless if you believe it or not, God does love you and He wants you to know this truth. This is why we go out, with Christ's wondrous love, and why we celebrate this wondrous cross.

¹⁴For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: ¹⁹that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰We

are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The Death of Jesus: [John 19:31-36](#)

³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," ^[Exodus 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psalm 34:20] ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." ^[Zech. 12:10]

They will look on the one they have pierced—the words of the last reading we had. As we look at the cross, we look at the cross that we have now placed nails in, and as we look at the cross here on Good Friday, we look at the cross for two main reasons. As we heard earlier that our sins put Him there, but He was pierced for us. Because of our sins, He went to the cross. So on Good Friday, there is sorrow for what Christ had to suffer for us and for the world, but that's not the whole meaning of Good Friday. If we only end there, that we put Jesus on the cross, there is no hope. There is no joy. There is really no hope for Easter. There is just sadness and we get depressed because of what we've done and what happened to Christ. But when we look at what Christ's righteous act means, it's not just that our sins put Him there but that He then brings us justification and life. Just as if we had not sinned, we are declared not guilty, our sins are separated from God, from the east to the west, those sins that were red and scarlet we will see will be turned white as snow.

So as we look to the cross, we confess, we repent of our sins, but we also cling to God because this is where God's justice and mercy meet. Because of the cross, we have grace and life.

So again, we relish in Good Friday. It truly is not just a sad Friday where Jesus dies but a Good Friday because He has died for you and for me. So we wonder and we look, but we look with peace, receiving grace and forgiveness. Death no longer reigns. We will see this as we enter again into this worship space to see what this death really means but life for Christ and life for you and me. All our righteous acts do not stack up to this one righteous act by Christ. It gives us life eternal. So we look to the cross with repentance but also receiving forgiveness, grace, salvation and life eternal.

The Righteous Act of Jesus: [Romans 5:17-18](#)

¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!

¹⁸ Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people.