



Friday, April 2, 2021 12:00 P.M.

First Presbyterian Church, Owensboro, Kentucky

THE THREE DAYS Good Friday

THE GATHERING

OPENING SENTENCES

1 Pet. 2:24

Christ Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

Blessed is the name of the Lord.

A brief silence is kept.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, look with mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and to be given over to the hands of sinners, and to suffer death on the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN 209

My Song Is Love Unknown

LOVE UNKNOWN

1. My song is love unknown, my Savior's love to me,
love to the loveless shown that they might lovely be.
O who am I that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh, and die?
2. He came from heaven's throne salvation to bestow;
the world that was his own would not its Savior know.

But O my Friend, my Friend indeed,
who at my need his life did spend!

3. Sometimes we strew his way, and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day hosannas to our King.
Then "Crucify!" is all our breath,
and for his death we thirst and cry.
4. Unheeding, we will have our dear Lord made away,
a murderer to save, the prince of life to slay.
Yet steadfast he to suffering goes,
that he his foes from thence might free.
5. Here might I stay and sing, no story so divine:
never was love, dear King, never was grief like thine.
This is my Friend, in whose sweet praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

THE WORD

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Holy One, our strength in suffering and our hope for salvation, lift up your Word of life and pour out your Spirit of grace so that we may follow faithfully all the way to the cross; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalm 22

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (Hymn 225)

FORTUNATUS NEW

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle; tell the triumph far and wide;
Tell aloud the wondrous story of the cross, the Crucified;
Tell how Christ, the world's redeemer, vanquished death the day he died.

John 19:17-42

Silence is kept.

1. Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (Were you there?)
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
O! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord? (Were you there?)
2. Were you there when they nailed him to the tree?...
3. Were you there when they pierced him in the side?...
4. Were you there when the sun refused to shine?...
5. Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?...

THE SOLEMN INTERCESSION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SOLEMN REPROACHES OF THE CROSS

O my people, O my church, what more could I have done for you?
Answer me!

I led you out of slavery into freedom, and delivered you through the waters of rebirth, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Forty years I led you through the desert, feeding you with manna on the way; I saved you from the time of trial and gave you my body, the bread of heaven, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I led you on your way in a pillar of cloud and fire, but you led me to the judgment hall of Pilate; I guided you by the light of the Holy Spirit, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I planted you as my fairest vineyard, but you brought forth bitter fruit; I made you branches of the vine and never left your side, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I poured out saving water from the rock, but you gave me vinegar to drink; I poured out my life and gave you the new covenant in my blood, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I gave you a royal scepter, but you gave me a crown of thorns; I gave you the kingdom and crowned you with eternal life, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I struck down your enemies, but you struck my head with a reed; I gave you my peace, but you draw the sword in my name, and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I opened the waters to lead you to the promised land, but you opened my side with a spear; I washed your feet as a sign of my love, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I lifted you up to the heights, but you lifted me high on the cross; I raised you from death and prepared for you the tree of life, but you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I grafted you into my people Israel, but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt, and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

I was hungry and you gave me no food, thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me, and you have made a cross for your Savior.

Lord, have mercy on us.

HYMN 221

O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

PASSION CHORALE

1. O sacred head, now wounded; with grief and shame weighed down;
now scornfully surrounded with thorns, thine only crown;
O sacred head, what glory, what bliss till now was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, I joy to call thee mine.
2. What thou, my Lord, hast suffered was all for sinners' gain:
mine, mine was the transgression, but thine the deadly pain.
Lo, here I fall, my Savior! 'Tis I deserve thy place;
look on me with thy favor, and grant to me thy grace.

3. What language shall I borrow to thank thee, dearest friend,
for this thy dying sorrow, thy pity without end?
O make me thine forever; and should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never outlive my love to thee.

Following the hymn, silence is kept.

The service continues with the Great Vigil of Easter, Saturday evening at six o'clock.



A Note on Holy Week Scriptural References to “The Jews”

As Christians, we live under the burden of a sad and violent history of anti-Semitism, in the sobering shadow of the Shoah (Holocaust), and with the painful awareness of current events in Israel/Palestine. It is important to us to be clear about what our sacred texts mean when they make reference to “the Jews,” especially during Holy Week, when we contemplate Jesus’ death.

When the crucifixion narratives speak of “the chief priests and leaders of the people,” they are referring to officials who collaborated closely with the Roman systems of oppression, and were viewed with contempt by much of the Jewish community of their time. They are never to be identified with the Jewish people as a whole, past or present.

It may be helpful to recall the cultural context of our Christian scriptures, emerging as they did from a small, originally Jewish community of believers in Jesus, who for reasons of faith in him as the Messiah, were eventually “put out of the synagogues” (John 9:18-23), their places of worship. In John’s usage especially, “the Jews” functions as a technical term for those among the people who did not accept Jesus as Messiah. It is a term that reflects the growing antagonism and mutual recrimination that developed in the latter part of the first century between church and synagogue. The gospels’ use of the term “the Jews” should never be understood, therefore, as a blanket condemnation of Jews in particular or in general.

It is one of the bitter ironies of history that our sacred texts have been used to justify the persecution of the covenant people who were and are forever God’s first love.

by Rev. Dr. J. Mary Luti