

April 2, 2021  
Good Friday

Lectionary Passages:

Isaiah 52:13-53:12  
Psalm 22  
Hebrews 10:16-25  
John 18:1-19:42



Selected Verses:

He was despised and rejected by others;  
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;  
and as one from whom others hide their faces  
he was despised, and we held him of no account. – Isaiah 53: 3

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?  
O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.  
Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel. – Psalm 22: 1-3

Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised  
is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds.  
– Hebrews 10: 23-24

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between  
them. – John 19:18

Devotional:

In the Jewish tradition, at the beginning of Passover meal, the youngest child asks, “Why  
is this night different than any other night?” At that point, the head of the household tells the  
events of God leading Israel out of Egypt. This night is different because God remembered His  
people and delivered them from slavery and bondage in Egypt. For the next forty years, we  
wandered through the wilderness until that generation had passed. Then, after the death of  
Moses, with Joshua as our leader, God brought us into the Promised Land flowing with milk and  
honey.

As the story is told, it transitions from third person to first person plural. In the  
remembering, we are transported back to the deliverance from Egypt, forty years in the  
wilderness and God leading us into the Promised Land. While God accomplished this  
generations ago, God is still delivering His people from slavery and bondage.

As Christians, on Good Friday, maybe the youngest at the table should ask, “Why is this  
day called ‘Good,’ while no other days are called good?” Then the eldest around the table tells

the events of the first Good Friday, reading from one of the four gospels. To tell about the Passover meal where Jesus took bread, broke it and said, “this is my body.” Then he took the cup and said, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.” Instead of celebrating the Passover every year, we remember that Jesus is the Pascal Lamb that brought a new covenant sealed with his blood.

Then we read and tell the story of Jesus praying in the garden, his arrest, trail and crucifixion. And while we remember, we tell the story switching from third person to first person plural. We were in the garden with Jesus when one of his closest disciples came and betrayed him with a kiss. While the guards arrested Jesus, Peter followed behind. The rest of us fled and hid in the darkness. By the end of the night, we were filled with fear that they might arrest us and we locked ourselves in the upper room. As we sat at the place where we celebrated the Passover meal, we could not believe what had so quickly happened. By noon, less than 18 hours later, Jesus was convicted and crucified. By 3:00, he died on the cross. We were completely lost and alone.

Yet, the day is called “Good” because Jesus took our sins upon himself. He sacrificed his life so that we could be freed from slavery and bondage. Sin no longer has control over us. Jesus took our sins upon himself on the cross. Through the blood of Jesus, God remembered His people and now passes over us. He remembered and gave us life in the midst of death. We hold fast knowing that God is faithful. When God promises that those who confess Jesus as Lord and Savior will be forgiven and saved, we believe it.

What the world needs now is not a friend. The nation does not need a scientist to tell us we will get through this dark time as a nation. What the world needs now is a savior. The world always needs to remember that Jesus died for our sins. In Christ, we are a new creation. Created by God to be people of love doing good deeds for one another and those God loves.

May we remember why this day is called “Good.” May we read the story and see that Jesus died for our sins to give us life and life eternal.

Prayer:

O God, we confess our distress when afflicted with pain. We often avoid those encounters that will cause us discomfort. It is easier to hide from distress than to be exposed to forms of misery and grief. Yet we believe in Christ, who was sacrificed for all. Help us to trust in him when he calls us to bear abuse on his behalf and show more compassion on others for whom pain is so constant. Amen.