

Remnant Life Church
March 29, 2024
The Power of Holy Week:
Good Friday

The life of the church has no more important season on the calendar – I believe – than Holy Week

- Some insist that time is Christmas
- The birth of Jesus is certainly important, but there have been countless other religious leaders whose births are celebrated
 - But they are all still dead
- Only Jesus rose again and is today seated at the right hand of God the Father praying for you and for me (**Rom 8:34**)

What was Jesus doing during that last week?

- Sunday – Jesus makes His triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the people are waving palm branches as a sign of victory and shouting...
 - *Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!* (**Mark 11:9-10**)
 - Of course, many of those very same people would be shouting again on Friday morning, but the words are different as they cry out, “Crucify Him!”
- Monday, Jesus returned to the temple and, seeing the Court of the Gentiles filled with traders and money changers making large profits overturned the tables (**Matt 21:10-17; Mark 11:15-18; Luke 19:45-48**)
- Tuesday – a day of teaching from the Mt. of Olives while also dealing with the Pharisees who were still trying to ensnare Him in a theological trap.
 - They questioned His authority; the paying of tribute; the resurrection; and the greatest commandment
 - (**Matt 21:23-24:51; Mk 11:27-13:37; Luke 20:1-21:36**)
- Wednesday – likely a day of rest and prayer (no biblical references called The Day of Silence)
- Thursday – The Passover meal in the upper room with His disciples; He washes the disciples’ feet as a final demonstration of serving one another; Judas leaves the others to go and betray Jesus; the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane with the 11 (**Matt 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23; John 13:1-30**)
- Which brings us to the final day of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry – Good Friday

Anticipation is something we all have experienced.

- Most often, it is something positive
 - Christmas day
 - An event you have tickets to
 - Seeing a friend or loved one who lives far away
- But anticipation can also be the awareness of a coming day or event that is less than positive

- How many of us gleefully anticipate our next trip to the dentist
- A scheduled closed-door meeting with your boss probably does not highlight your week
- And anticipating anything to do with a medical procedure is not very likely to keep you awake with joyful excitement

For the last week of His life, Jesus was filled with anticipation – but not in a positive way

- Jesus knew what His purpose and mission were
- He knew the reason that His Father had sent Him was to die in our place, to pay the price for our sin
 - But it was the way it was going to happen that was certainly filling His heart and mind with what could only be described as dread ([John 8:29](#))
 - Otherwise, why would He have asked His Father to consider a different option? ([Matt 26:42](#))

There are a number of different words to describe that last Thursday night into Friday morning for Jesus

- Certainly, betrayal would be one
- It begins as He finishes praying in the Garden of Gethsemane
 - It isn't just the fact that the soldiers and priests are coming to take him – it is who is at the front of the mob
 - One of His own
 - Judas Iscariot was one of the 12
 - He had walked with, eaten with, laughed with, and prayed with Jesus
 - He was, by all appearances, one who was trusted as the keeper of the money for the disciples
 - He was with them through it all
 - But surely sadness touched the eyes of Jesus when He saw the crowd coming led by one of His followers
- Abandoned would be another word of description
 - As Jesus is surrounded, the disciples briefly protest
 - Impetuous Peter even strikes out at Malcus, the servant of the High Priest, and cuts off his ear with a sword ([John 18:10](#))
 - Jesus rebukes Peter and heals the man's ear because even against those who would condemn and kill Him, He was merciful and kind ([Luke 22:49-51](#))
 - But in just moments, they had all fled, leaving Jesus alone with His captives
- He was then subjected to 6 trials
 - 3 were before Jewish religious leaders
 - These trials were illegal according to the law in at least 7 counts – among them...
 - No trial of a Jew may take place at night
 - The verdict could not be issued the same day as the trial
 - It was illegal to search for and present only hostile witnesses
 - All three of these trials pronounced Him guilty
 - 3 trials before Roman leaders
 - All three of these pronounced Him innocent

- But fearing a riot and word getting back to Caesar in Rome, they declared Jesus would be crucified
- Crucifixion was not unique to the Romans, but they had perfected it
 - This method of execution held two distinct purposes
 - The first, obviously, was to kill the accused
 - But the second was to do it in a way that caused the most pain and brought the greatest amount of shame and humiliation
 - It was an assault on not only the body but the spirit and the mind
 - Crucifixion was used by the Assyrians, the Medes and Persians as well as the Greeks prior to the Romans
 - While most all of us have become acquainted with the process and elements of crucifixion, the Romans did not use it all the time
 - AAMOF, it was reserved for criminals and slaves
 - It was illegal for a Roman citizen to be put to death in this manner which speaks to the level of barbarism and cruelty they had achieved
 - The Jewish leaders would not hear of stoning Jesus (the penalty for blasphemy) even though that was the crime He was accused of
 - Rabbinical law only provided for four methods of execution
 - Crucifixion was not one of them
 - Because this was not merely about getting rid of the troublesome Jesus – it was about sending a message to any other would-be messiahs who might take up the cause or continue Jesus’ work
- Make no mistake, Jesus was not looking forward to this time
 - He was scourged before being made to carry the beam of the cross
 - A whip called a flagrum was used
 - A wooden handle with leather straps attached
 - Along the straps lead balls or metal barbs were attached
 - At the end heavy lead weights with sharpened edges
 - As the soldier swung the whip the weights at the end would cause it to pick up speed
 - Upon striking the body the metal pieces would dig in
 - Then he would pull his arm back so that the metal would dig into and shred the skin and muscles
 - Not only the back but the neck, legs and middle of the torso
 - The loss of blood would have been enormous
 - The damage and shock to his body horrific
 - Many condemned died from this savage beating alone before even getting to the cross
 - And all throughout the time leading up to Golgotha, or “the skull,” beginning at his trials, he was beaten with fists and rods, spit on, mocked, and then finally stripped naked to humiliate him to the furthest level
 - Then on the cross, nailed by His hands and feet, He hung for six hours
 - His blood flow was restricted so that His organs would begin to shut down and every muscle begin to seize and cramp

- Due to the positioning of His body, he could not expand His lungs to breathe adequately so a slow process of asphyxiation was beginning to take occur
 - All the while, the shredded skin of His back is being pressed and rubbing against the rough wood, driving splinters and wooden fragments into his exposed flesh
- Yet, in the midst of what could only be called indescribable agony, Jesus knew something that those responsible for all of His misery did not
 - This was EXACTLY what needed to take place and was the fulfillment of what had been ordained since the Garden of Eden
 - Jesus was forced to anticipate the physical agony – yet He went willingly
 - He was forced to anticipate the emotional agony – yet He went willingly
 - He was forced to anticipate the agony of spiritual separation from His Father as He took the sin of all of mankind upon Himself – yet He went willingly
- But to all those who had been present at the foot of the cross and watching from afar – this appeared to be the end
 - The disciples had scattered and ran
 - His mother Mary and the women who had been with Him so faithfully surely had to look away from time to time, if only to spare themselves a moment of the graphic horror
 - Only the priests and religious leaders were sitting comfortably back in their homes, confidently assured that the deed was about to be completed
- And then, after six hours of experiencing every imaginable pain, with His final words “It is finished!” spoken, did Jesus surrender His life in payment for the sin of His Father’s creation.

And as we conclude our service this evening, consider this...

The ancient serpent emerged silently from the shadows. He moved about the last remaining mourners unseen like a faint mist of pestilence, yet he was fully aware of the pungent, sweet odor of death that hung in the air. He had sent his minions scurrying away with a low, guttural growl. He always enjoyed the abject terror in their eyes whenever he approached them. Normally, these types of earthly spectacles were beneath him and not worthy of his time, but he did not dare send an underling to confirm what had just taken place. He had won! After thousands and thousands of years spent in conflict, he had won! In spite of what all those old fools the prophets had been writing for centuries, the victory belonged to him! His enemy, since before the beginning of mortal time, was finally dead.

He had no understanding of what satisfaction was, nor had he ever experienced it, but this had to be similar to what he had heard others speak of. The relief, the victory, and now the delicious certainty that he had finally proven himself greater than even God Almighty.

The irony of what this all meant was not lost on him. He was now going to ascend to the very place he had first aspired to reach all those eons ago. All that he had lusted and longed for, that which had caused him to be expelled from the heavens in the first place, was now within his grasp and represented by the battered corpse hanging before him on that wooden cross. He

cackled to himself as his eyes drank in the heartbreak and emotional devastation, as he reveled in the wailing and the tears of those who had referred to this so-called Son of God Lord and Master just a few short hours ago. It certainly is finished, he mockingly thought as he turned to blend once again into the darkness.

Yet, as he turned, there was the birth of a thought that stirred in the furthest reaches of the back of his mind. It troubled him. It skirted the edge of his grasp, refusing to come into focus. He paused to look back one final time as if to reaffix the image in his memory. Jesus was there...hanging for everyone to see...beaten to the point of disfigured... dead...obviously defeated.

Yet, the father of lies could not have known in that brief moment the power of a single truth that was now unwaveringly, inevitably bearing down on him...Sunday was coming!