

Good Friday Service

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Welcome to our Good Friday service. This is a joint service of two congregations, Braymar Baptist Church in Edmonton and Trinity Baptist Church in Sherwood Park.

Why don't I have you introduce yourself? Sure. My name is Kent Dixon. I'm the lead pastor of Braymar Baptist. And so we've got 61 year history. We're in the same denomination as Trinity. And it's interesting. We're just up the hill from the Muttard Conservatory. So the pyramids with all the flowers and just east of downtown. And we're on a prominent corner in a really established community. So it's nice. And we're just east of our west of our brothers and sisters out here at Trinity. And it was actually Braymar that planted Trinity way back in the day.

Yeah. And I want to pick up on that. It would have been back in the late 70s when some families from Braymar came out to Sherwood Park and planted this church. Though our first church meeting happened, I think, in April of 1977 in a local school, this particular building was built shortly afterwards. And there was only a dirt road to get out here. But since then, of course, Baseline Road has been built and it's pretty big. If you ever want to come out and visit, you just drive east on Baseline Road until you get nervous that you're going to get lost.

And we're just out here just beyond Sherwood Park, which has grown almost all the way to the church. But my name is Jeff Gullihier, and I'm the lead pastor here. And it's just great to be able to do a service together with you. Absolutely.

[1 : 35] Yeah. Our service today is going to be a little shorter and a little more simple than an average Good Friday service. But I want you to know that we will be celebrating communion near the end of the service. And so what you might want to do even right now is delegate someone that you might be watching with to gather up some simple elements from around your home that you could use to take communion later on. So you might want to choose some bread or crackers, and then of course maybe some juice or water, or if your conscience allows, maybe some wine. And just hold on to those things and have them close by you. Though we are two different local congregations, we are united in Christ as one church. And we joyfully gather together in worship on this Good Friday. Hear this call to worship.

Today, we remember Jesus was crucified. He was pierced for our transgressions. He suffered and died for our iniquities. We remember the sacrifice of our Lord with gratitude because his death gives us life and brings redemption to the world. Let us worship our Savior. And let us first do so in prayer. Please pray with me. Loving God, today in remembrance and awe, we tread the holy ground of Calvary. This place of abandonment that has become the scene of our adoration. This place of suffering that has become the source of our peace. This place of our peace. This place of violence that has become the battlefield on which love is victorious. Merciful God, as we relive the events of this day, it is with awe that we count again the cost of our salvation. Words can hardly be found to utter our thanksgiving. But please accept our adoration. We pray this together in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, before Kent leads us in a biblical reflection today, I want to offer to us this poem by a well-known poet from the UK named Malcolm Geit.

He's got a wonderful book of poems that actually Kent and I both have called *Sounding the Seasons*. And this particular poem describes some of Jesus' journey in physically carrying the cross on the Via Della Rosa to the place of the cross. The title of the poem is *Jesus Falls the First Time*. He made the stones that paved the roads of Zion, and well he knows the path we make him tread. He met the devil as a roaring lion and still refused to turn these stones to bread. He made the earth. We're never closer. Divinity and dust come face, face to face. We flinch back from his Via Della Rosa. He sets his face like flint and takes our place, staggers beneath the black weight of us all, and falls with us that he might break our fall.

[5 : 26] Amen. Amen. Kent, lead us in a biblical reflection. It's an honor. I would love to. Well, good morning again. It's a joy to be here with my brother, Pastor Jeff, as we reflect on Good Friday with those who are watching or are listening this morning.

And today we recognize that churches around the world join together as a global body of Christ to recognize Good Friday, the day that Jesus Christ was crucified as a sacrifice for all people, so that we could be restored in a relationship with God, and that through Jesus we can have eternal life. For some of you who are watching or listening this morning, this may be something you've experienced every year for many years. For others, this may be the first Easter you're looking at it from a different perspective, beyond Easter bunnies and chocolate and candy.

You may have recognized and accepted Jesus Christ recently as your Savior and the Lord of your life, and we celebrate that with you this morning. And if you're watching or listening this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ in a personal way, I encourage you to talk to someone about that. Because a relationship with Jesus Christ is one that will change not only your life, but your eternal destiny as well. There are many songs, some with a long history and some newer, that we traditionally sing on Good Friday.

[7 : 02] Those songs remind us of what Jesus accomplished at his crucifixion. And there are verses or passages of Scripture that you may have traditionally heard as part of a Good Friday service, such as John 3.16, which many of us memorized as children, which tells us not only why Jesus was crucified, but also that it was God's amazing love and his desire to be in relationship with humanity that was behind that act.

But this morning, our reflection comes from perhaps an unexpected place. Psalm 46. And I encourage you to read that psalm on your own.

This morning, we're going to be focusing specifically on the words of God as he speaks in Psalm 46, verse 10. And he says this, Be still and know that I am God.

Let's unpack this together briefly this morning. Be still. I believe that when we hear these words, we immediately associate them with speaking about literal movement, about moving from one place to another.

Is that how you think of it? Do you think of it as a child might hear that from a parent? Be still. Be still. Stand still. Stop running around.

[8 : 33] Sure, that's part of it, but there's more. Be. Be present. Be in the moment. Live each day with intentionality and perspective.

As people who have been called to surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, we are called to simply be. And I don't want you to run off with that and begin thinking that we do, as we often do as humans, I need to be better.

I need to be more involved. Be somehow something other than what God intended me to be. simply who I am. Because, my friends, God loves you exactly as you are.

So what about being still? How is your stillness doing these days? In these days of constant pandemic statistics, health recommendations or concerns, tips about washing our hands, tips about staying apart, unknowns and questions about job security and paying the bills, has your stillness taken a hit?

Because I know mine has. And as we return to our passage this morning, this is not intended to somehow imply simply being quiet.

[10 : 06] In calling us to stillness, God has called us to stop striving, stop searching, stop seeking, anything else but him.

And if you're a parent this morning listening or watching, perhaps you can relate to one of the most common words we hear from young children. Why? Don't touch that.

Why? Don't pull the dog's tail. Why? Stop asking so many questions. Why? Why? As human beings, before we're willing to act, do you recognize, before we're even willing to follow directions, it's generally our nature to need context.

We want to gather information. We want to question. But in this passage, God's response to our why, when he calls for our stillness, is in effect similar to how parents often respond to their child's why.

God says, because I said so. God, in anticipation of our question, why should we be still?

[11 : 21] simply and firmly states, because. Know that I am God.

We read this again and again, and I believe we may recognize once again how limiting our human understanding can be. When we think of knowing, do we recognize that we often limit that to head knowledge?

knowledge? Just information? Something we've learned? Knowing God definitely includes factual knowledge about him. About his past acts.

His promises to us. But commentators suggest that in this context of Psalm 46, the psalmist is calling on the people of God to commit themselves to the Lord.

And to see him as their refuge, their strength, their strength, and their fortress. My friends, we are called to a life of surrender to God, recognizing that he is always in control, and that our story continues to be interwoven with his.

[12:37] I encourage each of us in the current stillness of the world and of our lives, and the stillness of Good Friday, may we remember to be still, recognizing that God is at work in and in control of our current circumstances, and our eternal destiny, and that on Good Friday, we reflect on the crucifixion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And in our stillness today, let's remember that the same I Am who speaks to us in Psalm 46, that same God who calls us to be still and put our trust in him is the same I Am who gave his life as the ultimate payment for our sins on the cross that still dark day at Calvary.

And my friends, even in the uncertainty of our current times, Emmanuel, God with us, still is.

Amen. Well, thank you very much, Kent. At this time, I will encourage you, as I instructed before, to gather up your elements for communion, perhaps distribute them with your family, who you might be with right now.

And we will celebrate communion together. I believe that both Trinity and Braemar celebrate communion perhaps on a monthly basis or so. but, of course, it's fitting, most fitting, that we celebrate communion on Good Friday.

[14:34] This is like the communion of all communions for us in the church calendar year. Hear this invitation to the table.

gather us in, the lost and the lonely, the broken and the breaking, the tired and the aching, who long for the nourishment found at your feast.

Gather us in, the done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering, the puzzled and pondering, who long for the company found at your feast.

Gather us in, the proud and pretentious, the sure and superior, the never inferior, who long for the leveling found at your feast.

Gather us in, the bright and the bustling, the stirrers and shakers, the kind laughter makers, who long for the deeper joys found at your feast.

[15:34] Gather us in, from corner or limelight, from mansion or campsite, from fears and obsession, from tears and depression, from untold excesses, from treasured successes, to meet, to eat, be given a seat, be joined to the vine, be offered new wine, become like the least, be found at the feast.

Gather us in. This is the Lord's table. This table does not belong to Trinity Baptist or to Bramar Baptist or any other church.

This is the table of the Lord. And so, come to the table, not because it is I who invite you, it is our Lord who invites you. It is his will that those who want him should meet him here.

This time, I'll ask Kent to say a prayer of thanks for both the bread and the cup. Father God, thank you that you've called us, as your people. You've called us to follow you.

You've called us to obey you. You've called us to follow your example. And so, Father, as you, through Jesus, celebrated the first communion with the disciples, as we commemorate that this morning, Father, we recognize not only the sacrifice of your son, but also that first day, that first Good Friday.

[17:03] Father, help us to be mindful of what that sacrifice means, not just today, but every day of our lives. We pray that you would bless these elements and bless each one that partakes of them.

We pray these things in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen. These are the gifts of God for the people of God. among friends, Jesus gathered around a table.

He took bread and broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you. Let's eat now in memory of and love for Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. And later, he took the cup of wine and said, this is the new relationship, the new covenant with God made possible because of my death.

Take this, all of you, to remember me. So let's drink in memory of and love for Jesus Christ.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[18 : 28] Amen. We're near the end of our service and again, I want to thank you for joining us today but I would encourage you to not hurry away from the cross.

Linger near it today to survey, to stand, to ponder the depths of our Savior's suffering and death for us.

I would encourage you to consider carefully and well the preciousness of his sacrifice for you, the greatness of his mercy shown toward you.

Then, depart from this Golgotha confidently, knowing that the Spirit will keep you in your crucified Savior's strong embrace and prompt you to trust and obey him always.

My friends, may the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you on the road. May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out your hands to serve.

[19 : 41] May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open your hearts to serve, to love, may you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in you.

Amen. Go in peace knowing that the promise of Easter Sunday is coming. God bless you.