

Good Friday 2018

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 March 2018

Preacher: Fr. Caleb Evans

[0:00] You may be seated. What a day this is.

We call this Friday good, We call this Friday good, Salvation accomplished by Jesus.

Summed up in his words, It is finished. Anglican pastor and writer John Stott, in his classic book, The Cross of Christ, helps us to pinpoint the cause of the tension we feel today.

Stott writes, Before we see the cross as something done for us, leading us to faith and worship, we have to see it as something done by us.

Leading us to repentance. As we face the cross, we can say to ourselves both, I did it. My sin sent him there. And he did it.

[1:41] His love took him there. I want us to think today about the cross as something done by us, with the prayer that it will lead us to repentance.

And about the cross as something done for us, leading us to faith and to worship. As we think about the cross as something done by us, we might stop and say, Wait a minute.

The cross isn't something done by me. That was almost 2,000 years ago. I wasn't there. I wasn't even alive yet. Well, on one level, yes, that's true.

We weren't physically there. I don't think any of us were anyway. It was Pilate who flogged Jesus. It was the crowd who shouted crucify him.

It was Pilate who gave in, with the Roman soldiers who actually carried out the crucifixion. How in the world, then, can we say that the cross is something done by us? Well, let's begin with this question.

[2:52] If I had been there, would I have been part of that crowd crying out for his death? I don't claim to have a definite answer on that front, but I'd say that the likelihood of any given one of us playing an unflattering role in the passion narrative if we had been there is probably pretty high.

But here is something that isn't speculation. Our sins sent him to the cross.

In this sense, we have to admit the cross is something that is done by us. We read a prophecy today about the death of Christ recorded in the prophet Isaiah.

So here again we read chapter 53, verse 6. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

That's the honest truth. We have gone astray. We have sinned, every last one of us. We have turned from the Lord to our own way. All of us. And what has happened?

[4:11] The Lord has laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. My brothers and my sisters, it was our sins that fell on Jesus' shoulders on the cross.

He died the death that we deserve in our place. He was obedient to death in our place to save us from our disobedience. He took the awful consequences of our sin upon himself.

He paid our debt. In this sense, indeed, the cross is something done by us. Do you want to know how hideous and how horrible our sin really is?

Think of the perfect, righteous Son of God crushed. That should give us a clue. Think of the flogging, the crown of thorns, the nails, the hanging in agony before dying horribly of asphyxiation. Think of that. And then realize, my sin is really that bad. My brothers and my sisters, you see that our sin really is that bad?

[5:27] Seeing Christ bearing our iniquity, seeing Jesus crushed because of our sins, what can we do? Can we do anything other than to admit that we are guilty, to cry out for mercy, and to repent?

What else could be the proper response to the knowledge of how heinous our sin really is? Seeing the cross as something done by us should lead us to repentance.

And today is a great opportunity to repent. But amazingly, today is not just a day of repentance.

It's also a day of faith and even worship. Because the cross is something done for us as well. Because the cross is something that Jesus took upon himself.

And he did this because he loves us. When we look at the cross, and when we look at what Jesus suffered there, we're reminded not only of how awful our sin really is, but of how much God must love us to go to such lengths to save us.

[6:49] Yes, there's a sense in which my sin put him on that cross. But he chose to do it because he loves me that much. And this is glorious gospel news.

Because if, as the prophet Isaiah tells us, Christ has taken our iniquities, our sins, if Christ was pierced for my transgressions, if he has offered himself up as an offering for my guilt, if Christ has borne my sins, if he has done all of this, then I can say that my sins are gone forever.

My guilt is gone forever. God will remember my sins no more because Jesus has washed them away with his very blood. We read in Hebrews chapter 10 starting in verse 12, chapter 10. on the cross. The author of Hebrews is telling us. Jesus has wiped away the sin, has wiped away the guilt, has wiped away the debt of everyone who believes in him and he has done it completely. When Jesus on the cross said, it is finished, he meant it. everything that even the worst of us needed to be right with God is accomplished.

[8:50] And Jesus did it all. We simply receive it as a gift through faith in what Christ has accomplished in our behalf. Seeing the horror of our sins, what we have done, we confess them, we call out for mercy, we repent.

Seeing what Jesus has accomplished, that he has indeed paid it all, we trust him and we worship him. Today is a day when we see our sin and we must see it.

But it is also a day for us to see God's amazing love for us. When our sin, awful as it is, goes up against God's redeeming love in Jesus, though, which one wins?

What do you think? If we are in Christ, our sins, horrible as they are, don't stand a chance.

Again, when Jesus said, it is finished, he was telling the truth. The theologian and reformer Martin Luther once said this, when the devil throws our sins up to us and declares that we deserve death and hell, we ought to speak thus.

[10:23] I admit that I deserve death and hell, what of it? Does this mean that I shall be sentenced to eternal damnation? By no means, for I know one who suffered and made satisfaction in my behalf.

His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and where he is, there I shall be also. That is good news this Good Friday.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Amen.