

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2016

Luke 23: 1-6, 13-18,22-25

Luke 23:32-43

Luk3 23:44-47,50-56

Jesus' Death- Significance for Me?

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” When he had said this, he breathed his last. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching these things.”

Good Friday is one of oldest special days of the Christian year when we come together to hear the story of Christ's death on the cross. Like many who have gone before us we gather with fascination to hear the story and to reflect upon the cross which is so foreign to our way of living. In days past the cross was a symbol of pain and despair yet it speaks to us especially those whose hopes have been crushed, those in pain and those in despair. But for those who believe in the One who was crucified, this cross also speaks of hope. This cross speaks of God bringing life out of disappointment, despair and even out of death. And it is through the suffering of Jesus on the cross that we are offered hope and salvation.

There are two questions that are often asked. One is, “Why was Jesus crucified?”

He was crucified because he was the Son of God who came to save those which were lost; those who had turned away from God and those who did not know him at all.

He was crucified because he stood up against the established norms of the times and questioned what was right and wrong in leading people to faith in God the Father. He stood up for those who wondered about they might draw closer to God and live his way rather than the way of the law of the land. He believed in right and proper living; in giving people opportunities to change their lives for the better as they opened their hearts towards God's love and gift of grace.

He was crucified because people were swayed from their beliefs that he was not who he said he was even though they had witnessed miracles, experienced passion and were in awe of his knowledge of God. They did not want to stand up for their beliefs for they were afraid to die themselves. We often claim we belong to Jesus yet when in a crowd of people we do not know what to say or understand for we are afraid to speak of our faith.

He was crucified because God had sent his Son to live an earthly life so that one day he would die for the sake of all who sin against God. He died in order to save us from ourselves. But those who first believed, followed and loved him walked away. Just like we do when we are confronted with difficult choices in our lives even though what is right is in following Christ's way of justice and right and drawing closer to God and having a personal relationship with the One who made us.

And the second question== why is Jesus' death significant to me?

To all of human history, it is through his death that the course of human history was changed. We count the years of our lives in terms of his resurrection and we look at how people through the ages have looked at their world, not through the sins of the past, but through the hope of future. And Jesus changed the understanding of God from one of hurt and pain to a God of unconditional love.

Jesus' death is significant- not by how he died- crucifixion was considered a normal form of capital punishment at that time, yet it is because he is the Son of God, known to his followers as the One God sent to bring change in the way people were to live out their lives on earth—in love and for love of others and to have hope beyond life in this world.

Jesus' death is significant to me- and to those who believe- because God's promise is fulfilled—that the Messiah would come and would save his people. In order for this to happen, a man had to die- but Jesus was no ordinary man, he was without sin and the Son of God.

Jesus' death marks the end of his earthly life amongst people and begins his transition to be with God. It marks the time when those who heard him speak and perform miracles to make sense of the promises of God being fulfilled in His life.

And this is significant to those who believe because Jesus lived a human life, died and with the promise of hope- the resurrection offers new life for all.

Jesus' death is significant because today the carpenter's hands are nailed to the cross, the king of kings is crowned with thorns and wears the purple robe of mockery. Today Jesus sets us free even though he is nailed to a tree. Today is God's Friday and we envision our place at the foot of the cross and mourn with all those who believe. It is our human sinfulness that put Jesus there in order that we might return to the God who made us and God calls us to be one in faith and one in love.

Jesus' death is significant to you if you profess your faith in him, and have received God's gift of life and hope through Christ alone.

Let us pray: God of love, we praise you for you sent Jesus into our world to save us from sin. On this Good Friday we remember Jesus' death on the cross and how through this self-giving act of love, has set us free. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy. As we believe in Jesus as saviour and lord. Hear our prayer we offer in this time of silence. AMEN

Let us reflect on this as we sing together "Were You There?"