Good Friday

April 14, 2017

12:00 PM



*Good Friday marks the death of Jesus Christ. It is called “good” because of what Jesus’ death means for the redemption of the world. Worship on this day has three aims: (1) to narrate and remember the events of Jesus’ death, (2) to open up the meaning of these events for our understanding of God and the redemption accomplished by the cross,*

*and (3) to invite worshipers to renewed prayer and dedication.*

Prayer of Invocation

O Christ, who forsook no one but was forsaken by the closest of friends, and who committed no crime yet was sentenced to a criminal’s death, we enter your presence in awe and adoration. On this day, centuries ago, you could have saved your life, but you refused to betray the purpose for which you had been born. You had come into the world to love God and neighbor as yourself, and when that love required you to shoulder a cross, you summoned the strength to bear it. Today, O Christ, as we sing and pray about the cross, teach us its meaning once again and help us to take up our cross and follow you. Amen.

Let us confess our sins...

Prayer of Confession

 Merciful God, we meet each other today at the foot of the cross, as inhabitants of one world. We wait with each other as those who inflict wounds on one another:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who deny justice to others:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who put our trust in power:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who are greedy:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who put others on trial:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who refuse to receive:

 **be merciful to us.**

 As those who are afraid of the world’s torment:

 **be merciful to us. Amen.**

Lament

*Jesus expressed his own lament on the cross with the words of Psalm 22:1. The Psalms also provide us language in which to express honest lament, as well as trust and hope. The following rendering of Psalm 22 helps us to remember Jesus’ lament, to express our own experiences of pain, to sense Jesus’ identification with us in our suffering, and to conclude by offering words of trust and praise.*

We hear Jesus say: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And we too at times pray:

 **“Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?”**

O 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.

 **In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.”**

We hear the words of the ancient psalm even as we see Jesus: “But I am a worm and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people. All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads; ‘Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver - let him rescue the one in whom he delights!’” And we too pray:

 **“Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe. On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.”**

*Silent reflection*

Remembering Jesus, we are bold even in our lament to offer words of trust and praise:

 **“I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: You who revere the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who revere him.**

 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

 **For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow down all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him. Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.”**

Assurance of Pardon           Colossians 1

In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through him. Brothers and sisters: through the cross of Christ we are forgiven and reconciled to God. Praise be to God!

Prayer for Illumination

 Lord, we believe. **Help our unbelief.**

The Reading of Scripture from John 19

Prayer

 Giver of life, we wait with you to offer the hope that comes from the cross to earth’s darkest places. Where pain is deep and affection is denied:

 **let love break through.**

 Where justice is destroyed,

 **let sensitivity to right spring up.**

 Where hope is crucified,

 **let faith persist.**

 Where peace has no chance,

 **let passion live on.**

 Where truth is trampled underfoot,

 **let the struggle continue.**

 Where fear paralyzes,

 **let forgiveness break through.**

 Eternal God, reach into the silent darkness of our souls with the radiance of the cross. O you who are the bearer of all pain,

 **have mercy on us.**

 Giver of life,

 **have mercy on us.**

 Merciful God,

 **have mercy on us. Amen.**

Benediction

Do not hurry away from the cross. Linger near to survey, to stand, to ponder our Savior’s suffering and death. Consider, carefully and well, the preciousness of his sacrifice for you, the greatness of his mercy toward you. Then depart from 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. The God of peace will go with you. Amen.

*Westminster Presbyterian Church 1250 W. Exchange St. Akron, Ohio 44313*

[*www.westminsterakron.com*](http://www.westminsterakron.com) *330-836-2226*