

LAMB OF GOD

**3 He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
And like one from whom men hide their face
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**

**4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore,
And our sorrows He carried;
Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions,
He was crushed for our iniquities;
The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him,
And by His scourging we are healed.**

**6 All of us like sheep have gone astray,
Each of us has turned to his own way;
But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all
To fall on Him.**

**7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He did not open His mouth;
Like a lamb that is led to slaughter,
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,
So He did not open His mouth. Isaiah 53:3-7**

Beloved in the Lord,

The message of Good Friday, is the core of our faith and it is expressed here in verses 4 and 5 of our text: **Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.**

This passage from Isaiah corresponds with what Jesus Himself taught seven hundred years later:

¹⁴ As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. John 3:14-17

What I would like to emphasise today is that the one who is behind it all is God Himself. He bore our griefs, our iniquities, our sorrows, our sin. He was a pierced for our transgression. He took upon Himself the punishment that was due us.

God so loved the world – each one of us that He gave His Son for our redemption. Salvation is of and from God. It begins with Him and it ends with Him. He loved us and He suffered for us so that we may have life eternal.

Today on Good Friday as we reflect upon God's infinite grace and mercy, revealed to us through Jesus Christ, let us see that Jesus was **despised; condemned; cursed and killed** for us.

Firstly **He was despised.**

The religious people of the day despised Jesus. The Pharisees and Sadducees hated Him. They despised Him for claiming to be the Son of God. They absolutely hated Him. From the moment Jesus began to teach this truth they despised Him. They were seeking ways to get rid of Him, kill Him. Right at the outset, when Jesus read out a passage from Isaiah 61 and then said that He was the fulfilment of this prophecy they began to despise Him. The passage Jesus read was:

"¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; ² To proclaim the favourable year of the LORD. Is.61:1-2

When Jesus said that this was about Him, they pushed Him out of the Temple and tried to push Him over a cliff.

He was despised and riled right up until He died on Calvary. Even when He was hanging on the cross they mocked Him saying "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross, and save yourself."

If sometimes we are despised, mocked for our faith and trust in Jesus, may we be comforted in the fact that He bore so much more than we ever will. He is able to console us, because He has been there.

He was condemned.

The next word we look at is condemned. Jesus was really condemned three times. The first time already in the Garden of Eden. When Adam sinned God said to the serpent:

***"Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;
¹⁵ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel." Genesis 3:14-15***

This was the first prophecy that one day, one born of a woman, will die (you shall bruise him on the heel) but He shall bruise him (the devil) on the head. Crush him completely. So we see that Calvary was in God's plan all along.

God then also killed a lamb to make clothes for Adam and Eve to cover their nakedness which had been exposed by sin. An innocent animal had to die to cover their sin. This was the first sacrifice. The first shedding of blood for sin. This was a symbol or type of Christ, showing that one day God would shed the blood of the Lamb of God to atone for all sin.

The second time Jesus was condemned was in front of the Sanhedrin. The High Priest tore his robes and declared that Jesus was guilty of blasphemy and deserved to die for claiming to be The Son of God.

Because the Sanhedrin could not legally execute Jesus under Roman law, they needed to turn to their enemies for help. They needed a decree from the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate. It is interesting what alignments sinners make to do their dirty work.

Pilate was a weak man, he was influenced by the masses. The shouts of crucify him, crucify him, finally convinced him and he condemned Jesus to death. This was the third condemnation.

We need to be clear that Jesus was completely innocent. It was our sin, our punishment that He bore. He died in our place.

He was cursed.

The third word we look at today is cursed. Paul wrote in Galatians:

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE”— Gal.3:13

All throughout God’s economy obedience brings blessing and disobedience a curse.

So that we would not have to be accursed for our sin, so that we would not have to spend eternity in hell for our sins, Jesus took our curse upon Himself. He died a substitutionary death, that is, He died our death. He took our curse, He bore our punishment.

We cannot even begin to imagine what that required of Him. How terrible His death was that day on Good Friday. The physical suffering was indescribable. Crucifixion was cruel and horrible. It was a slow painful agonizing way to die. You have to fight for every breath. Your hands and feet are pierced through with iron nails. You were already dehydrated and half dead from flogging. But there was more to it than that. We read that Jesus cried out at about the ninth hour: “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachtani – My God, My God, Why have You forsaken me?”

This was the darkest hour of all. The sun has hidden its face already for about three hours even though it was early afternoon. A greater darkness has descended upon Jesus’ soul. For the first time since eternity, He was separated from His Father. God had turned away and left Him alone. God could no longer look upon Him because He had become sin. He had taken upon Himself all sin – yours, mine, everybody’s. He is alone. He is literally experiencing hell, because hell is separation from light, separation from God. He suffers hell so that you and I would not have to.

Notice Jesus did not call out ABBA, ABBA – my Father, but Eli, Eli – My God. As He hung there in the darkness He was facing the judgement of God. He was cursed with the curse of our sin.

Someone once rightly said that if you were the only person in the world that needed saving, Jesus still would have died for you. That is how great His love is.

He was killed.

The last word we look at is killed. Jesus was killed. He died at 3.00pm on that Friday. At precisely that time in Jerusalem, the Passover lambs were being killed for the feast. This was no coincidence. Jesus was killed so that His blood could atone for all sin, for all time.

As it was that first night of the Passover, a lamb had to die. The blood was applied to the doorposts of the house so that the death angel seeing the blood would Passover and leave everyone alive. Obedience was of utmost importance. If someone failed to apply the blood, then, the first born in the house would have died. The blood was what saved them.

Today, only the blood of Jesus can bring salvation. There is no other solution for sin. Nothing, but the blood of Jesus. There is salvation in no other and in no other way. Jesus is the Way. He said: ***“Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” John 14:6***

In order for us to be saved from sin, in order for us to inherit eternal life, we need to be washed in the blood of Jesus. This happens when we admit our sin, confess it and ask Jesus to save us.

Jesus was despised, condemned, cursed and killed, so that we may be free.

Have you accepted His salvation? Have you humbled yourself before Him and asked: “God be merciful to me a sinner?”

If you have, live in His grace. If you haven’t what are you waiting for. Come to Him now. He will accept you as you are and wash you clean.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.