

Saint Timothy Lutheran – Edmonds, WA

March 3, 2010 – Lent III

Rev. Craig A. Patterson (Based upon the sermon series
“Words of Life from the Cross,” CPH, 2010.)

“The Faithful Word”

(Text: Matthew 27:45-46)

Context: At the end of a three year public ministry, “Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem,” that is, He, intentionally went to Jerusalem to suffer and die for sinners. When Jesus entered Jerusalem the people shouted praises, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna!” Yet, later that same week, the hatred of the Jewish leaders led the Roman proconsul, Pontius Pilate, to hand Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified. They flogged Him, led Him out to be crucified, nailed Him to the cross, and hung Him there to die. As He is dying, the last statements that Jesus speaks pour life into the souls of sinners still today. Tonight, we hear Jesus’ third statement, “Eli, Eli lama sabbachthani?,” that is “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?!”

I. The Penalty Of All Human Sins (Our Sins Included) Were Placed On Jesus.

- A. Just as foretold by the prophets and expressed in Psalm 22.
 - 1. Jesus undertook His role as the “Lamb of God” that takes away the sin of the world willingly and lovingly.
 - 2. Jesus fulfilled the words of the prophet David.
 - a. “For dogs have surrounded Me; and a band of evildoers has encompassed Me; they pierced My hands and feet,” wrote David (Ps. 22:16).
- B. This load of sin alienated Jesus (the Lamb of God) from God.
 - 1. Sin alienates sinners from God.
 - 2. Sin separates people from God and from each other.
- C. Sinfulness and its effects cannot exist with a holy God.
 - 1. God is abhorred by sin.
 - 2. Sin has impacted the good creation of God and warped it into a creation that is ignorant of its Creator and performs in a manner never intended by God.
- D. Many misunderstood what was happening on the cross that Friday afternoon.
 - 1. “This man is calling for Elijah,” some began saying who heard Jesus’ words.
 - 2. They thought that a suffering Jesus was asking for Elijah to help Him
 - a. The mistook the name “Eli” for “Elijah.”

II. From Eternity, This Abandonment By God Was Planned In Order To Save Mankind.

- A. Jesus was/is the perfect Substitute who took our place on the cross for we deserved the punishment, not Him.
 - 1. For every transgression of God’s law we deserve eternal abandonment from God.
 - 2. Yet, God placed on Jesus the penalty that we all deserve.
 - 3. Thus, our payment for sin has been made for us, in full, by the Son of God.
- B. This abandonment is the “second death” from which we are spared due to Christ’s sacrifice.
 - 1. The second death, eternal death, is mentioned in Revelation 2:11, “...He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death.”
 - 2. In Christ and because of Him, we do overcome.
- C. Still, Jesus prays to the God who appears to have abandoned Him in His time of need.
 - 1. The God who is, apparently, silent and absent.
 - 2. Jesus cries out in darkness from the cross, and His cries trail off into the silence of space.
 - 3. And still, like David who prayed these words before Him, He prays.
 - 4. Here is the paradox of faith. Faith prays to the God who appears not to be there, who appears to have withdrawn, whose hand of blessing has shut tightly, who appears not to be there. Faith calls out “my God” and will not let God off the hook. This is faith that clings to the promise of God, when all that you have is the promise of God. This is the faith that is at the heart of our faith. He trusts for us. He prays for us. He cries out for us. He suffers for us. He dies for us. He embraces us so that we will never be forsaken in our time of need.
- D. Because Jesus did this for us, we rest secure, we have peace no matter the trouble.