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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
March 17, 2024
5th Sunday in Lent

Old Testament Lesson: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Passion History: Jesus scourged, abused, condemned.

Hymns: 149; 145; 163:1-4,6; 151:7

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Hebrews 5:7-9

“In the days of his flesh, he (Jesus) offered prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. ⁹ After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.” (EHV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: Passion Sunday

Traditionally this fifth Sunday in Lent is called Passion Sunday. During Lent our tradition is to read the Passion History of Christ as it has been compiled from all four gospels. Why do we use the word passion for Jesus' sufferings and death? When we use this word in other contexts it has a meaning that conveys intensity. If a man has a passion for football, he likely watches great deal of it on TV, and doesn't want to be disturbed by trivial things like the house burning down around him. He's watching football!

Sometimes people can be intense about things that aren't that important, but it is to them.

When we consider Jesus' Passion we note the intensity. We take note of the intensity of Jesus' desire for our salvation. He possessed a passion for the salvation of lost sinners. "*The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*" (Luke 19:10) We also note the intensity of the sufferings of our Lord. While the gospels do not dwell on the blood and gore, what we read in the Passion History this morning was a horror that Jesus experienced. However, the physical sufferings of our Lord, as disturbing as they may be, were only the proverbial tip of the iceberg of what Jesus endured for us and our salvation. On this Passion Sunday the Holy Spirit would lead us to a deeper appreciation of what it cost Jesus to redeem us from sin and death, to redeem us to God. On this Passion Sunday may we be led to more fully appreciate how --

THEME: Jesus' Passion Secures Our Salvation.

We all know and believe with grateful hearts that Jesus has secured our salvation. We know that Jesus did this by taking away our sins. We look to Jesus just as John the Baptist directed us, "*Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29) We praise and thank God for this gift of grace. Our sermon theme uses that word that we associate with lent, "Passion." Today, we are considering how Jesus' Passion secured our salvation. The Spirit would have us appreciate what it took for Jesus to accomplish this great feat of unparalleled heroic measures. With eyes of faith let us really --

I. See Jesus' Intensity of Suffering.

"In the days of his flesh, he offered prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered." (v.7-8)

The opening words of our text take us back to the Garden of Gethsemane. These inspired words emphasize the significance of what took place there. Jesus, the Son of God from all eternity, took on our flesh and blood. He did this to make it possible for Him to suffer and die in our place. Some would point out that dying, being foreign to the nature of God, would have made it all the more

burdensome, but it wasn't just that death would be foreign to Jesus because of His divine nature. It was the burden of sin and its curse, a burden about which man seems oblivious, that weighed heavily upon Jesus. Already in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was in anguish, and prayed fervently for His Father in heaven, if it were at all possible, to remove this cup of suffering from Him.

What the Holy Spirit reveals for our consideration is that Jesus was praying to the One who could deliver Him from death. God the Father could have saved Jesus. It would have been thoroughly just and fair for God to spare Jesus and condemn us. He could have answered Jesus' prayer in that way, but the Father didn't answer in that way. Jesus prayed with submissive reverence. Jesus prayed, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."* (Matthew 26:39)

The Father answered Jesus' prayer. The Father sent an angel to minister to Jesus, to strengthen Him. We are not told exactly how that took place, but Jesus' prayers were not in vain. He was strengthened for the ordeal that lay before Him. And so it began, and what we see is Jesus' reverent obedience. He went out to meet that mob coming to arrest Him and handed Himself over to them. He showed that He had the power to defeat them, but rather than doing that, Jesus used His power to save, even healing one of them when Peter had cut the man with his sword.

What a marvel it is for us to consider that Jesus, knowing all that was before Him, and already suffering a great anguish of spirit, went forward according to the will of God and suffered intensely. Yes, we have read of the things that were done to Jesus. Scourging was a brutal, inhumane, cruel punishment. The crown of thorns, the many beatings and mockery and blasphemy, the crucifixion with the crushing hammer blows driving the spikes through hands and feet, the torment of the cross. All that physical torment was a necessary element that Christ endured in His submissive reverence to God the Father's will that you, you and I be spared the torments of hell. And yes, Jesus did endure the God-forsaken element of hell's anguish while suffering on the cross.

Jesus' PASSION, an intense pain and suffering endured in submissive reverent obedience brought Jesus to the fulfillment of

His purpose, to win for us salvation. Now consider Jesus' Passion and --

II. See Jesus' Intensity of Purpose.

Our text concludes,

"After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him." (v.9)

That is a statement of purpose being fulfilled. The purpose was that Jesus become the source of eternal salvation. That was always Jesus' purpose. One might say that it was His purpose from the day He was born, but actually it was Jesus' purpose even before He was born. It was the divine purpose of the Triune God to bring eternal salvation to a world of sinners. Jesus the God Man bore that purpose and carried it out in His life. It wasn't about making a good life for Himself. Jesus said, *"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

(Matthew 20:28)

Many consider the ultimate goal and purpose anyone could have, is to make this world a better place. Jesus' purpose was so much greater and higher than that. It was sin that corrupted the world and brought sorrow and pain and sickness and death so that this world has such devastating problems. Those who seek to make this world a better place are addressing the symptoms that cannot be removed, try as they might. Jesus' purpose was to deliver us from this present evil world by being the source of eternal salvation.

That was Jesus' passion, and He was intense about it. Knowing what lay before Him, Jesus set His face for Jerusalem (Luke 9:51) Again, when the time was approaching for Jesus to fulfill His purpose of salvation Jesus addressed this with His disciples. *"Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."*²² *Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"*²³ *But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

(Matthew 16:21-23)

Jesus would not be deterred. He had to go to Jerusalem and be taken by His enemies and suffer for His purpose to be complete, and His mission of salvation fulfilled. Jesus identified Peter's well-intended words as a temptation from the devil himself. Jesus' passion was and is your salvation.

III. Gain Intensity of Faith in a Perfect Savior.

“He became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.” (v.9)

It is important that we understand what the Spirit is conveying to us with these words. What does it mean that we “obey” Jesus? Too many people misunderstand these words and go back to the law and speak of a need to try to keep the law perfectly in our lives for us to gain eternal salvation. The word the Spirit used here for us obeying Jesus is the same word that the Spirit used to describe Jesus' obedience to the Father. It is not a matter of coercion for us any more than it was matter of coercion for Jesus. This is the obedience of faith. This is lending an ear to hear the truth of the gospel, and dismissing the ideas that we by our own works of righteousness can attain eternal salvation. What the Spirit is telling us is that we, comprehending the intensity of Jesus' passion for our salvation, comprehending the deep desire of our Lord that we be saved from sin and death, that we then trust Him and all that He has done for us. Jesus said, *“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life.”*

(John 6:30)

Indeed, we by our meditating upon the Lord's Passion and taking to heart the greatness of His love, and the intensity of His suffering, both of body and soul, we shall love Him with passion. This is our passion, an intense interest, not only an interest in who Jesus is, but a complete dedication of self to the Lord that only the Holy Spirit can work in our hearts and lives.

The Holy Spirit works this passion within us through the means of grace. The Spirit worked through our baptism, and our remembering of our baptism, the washing us clean from sin. The Spirit strengthens our passion for Jesus with the Lord's Supper in

which we receive again and again the forgiveness of sins by receiving the very body and true blood which Jesus offered for our redemption. The Spirit works through the word of the gospel, including the detailed report of how Jesus willingly went forward and suffered intensely for us and our salvation. Yes, the Spirit works within us so as we meditate upon the wondrous truths of our salvation, this passion grows within our hearts, and produces fruits of faith in our lives, that others might see the Lord's passion to save them also.

That is the obedience of faith that is spoken of in our text. Lay hold on eternal life. Hear the message of God's love for you revealed in Jesus' death and resurrection, and know that you have eternal life through faith in His name. Then you too shall know that passion, that intense desire to love and serve Him who so loved us and gave Himself for us.

AMEN.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.