

**NOTE 1** – Thank you for joining us for our Good Friday Service. We gather tonight to consider and commemorate the Crucifixion of Christ Jesus. Scripture has much to say concerning the Cross and of the One who died upon it. I have chosen to share a slate of relevant texts with you (i.e., that we might be stirred to ever-increasing degrees of faith, devotion and love).

**NOTE 2** – In full disclosure, pastors spend a significant amount of time working to find new and fresh ways to present timeless truth in a timely manner. Whether it be through poignant stories or devices like alliteration, we do all we can to make our teachings both memorable and engaging. Yet sometimes it is refreshing to simply consider the Word as is (i.e., making time for the public reading of Scripture). How many believe that the Word of God still speaks for itself? Let us delve in...

## **PASSAGE #1**

**KEY 1** – John the Revelator identifies Jesus in the following manner...

**Revelation 13:8b (NIV, Emphasis Mine)**

8 [As] . . . the Lamb who was **slain from the creation of the world**.

**QUOTE** – “The meaning here is, not that he [Jesus] was actually put to death ‘from the foundation of the world,’ but that the intention to give him for a sacrifice was formed then, and that it was so certain that it might be spoken of as actually then occurring.” –Barnes

**KEY** – Whatever the Cross was, it was by no means an accident. Liberal scholars reckon the Crucifixion as the unintended end-result of Jesus’ ministry gone awry. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth! Rather, the Cross, serves as the culmination of a plan that stretches back unto eternity past. It serves as the climax of a story so expansive and grand, only God could have penned it. Before you were born and we fell, God had a plan!

## **PASSAGE #2**

**Matthew 26:36–44**

36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.” 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?” . . . 41 “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” 42 He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.” 43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

**KEY** – We can discern the horrors of the suffering of Christ on the Cross by noting His reaction to it beforehand. The response of Christ to His imminent experience on the Cross forever negates any attempt to downplay, diminish or sanitize the event of His affliction and death. Rather, we do well to consider the Cross for what it was: a place of extreme physical, emotional, social and spiritual horror.

### PASSAGE #3

#### John 3:16–17

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

**KEY 1** – The gift of God herein ultimately refers to the giving of His Son on the Cross. Let us note that the Cross forever reveals the love of God for the wayward and sinful. If you truly want to know how much God loves you, the forever remains the same: THIS MUCH. Moreover...

**KEY 2** – The giving of Christ on the Cross reveals the boundless nature of love divine. He loved us enough to die for us when we were the most unlovable and powerless to change our condition. May this related passage speak to our hearts and minds, causing us to both understand and receive His divine affection...

#### Romans 5:6b–8 (Emphasis Mine)

6 . . . at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ **died for the ungodly**. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were **still sinners**, Christ died for us.

### PASSAGE #4

#### Isaiah 53:4–6

4 Surely he took up our pain  
and bore our suffering,  
yet we considered him punished by God,  
stricken by him, and afflicted.  
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**KEY 1** – For whose crime(s) was Jesus penalized? His enemies would have replied that Jesus perished for His perceived blasphemies and disregard for the Law (i.e., divine punishment). Of course, we know the truth and the testimony of Scripture: Christ committed “no sin” with no deceit being “found in his mouth” (1 Pet. 2:22). In truth, Jesus’ agony and affliction were not born of His misdeeds, but our own...

**KEY 2** – There is great relief in knowing that Jesus paid the penalty for my sins. In this, we find freedom from condemnation, etc.! Yet there remains great pain in knowing that I caused such agony in the life of One most wonderful. When you love someone, it grieves you to cause them pain. This holds true for those who love Him!

**KEY 3** – Thus, Good Friday shall always pierce the hearts of the faithful, as surely as Christ was pierced for them.

## **PASSAGE #5**

### **2 Corinthians 5:21**

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**KEY** – It is best to see the Cross as a place of spiritual exchange: our sin is traded herein for His righteousness (i.e., rightness and/or right standing with the Father). How does the Lord see us apart from Christ and His work? As depraved enemies (Eph. 2), cloaked in the vilest and most defiled of rags (Isa. 64:6). How does He see us as we believe upon the Christ? As beloved children with the radiance, standing, access and welcome of His Son! We do well to realize that the death of Christ is the only means whereby we find peace with God (cf. Rom. 5:1).

## **PASSAGE #6**

### **Ephesians 2:11–20**

11 . . . remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

**KEY** – The Cross is the great unifier. Regardless of who you are and what you may have done, we all share the same need for the same Savior. The Cross worked to unify the Jews and Gentiles of the ancient world, despite centuries of animosity and racial and religious prejudice. It can do the same in this generation, in this tribalized hour. The same Cross that brought us peace with God brings us peace with one another....

### **Galatians 3:26–28**

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## PASSAGE #7

### 1 Peter 3:18 (Emphasis Mine)

8 . . . Christ . . . suffered **once** for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

**KEY** – The death of Christ on the Cross was a one-time act, being sufficient to pay the price for our salvation! The Lord has done His part to make a way home for any-and-all who will come; no further work shall be done. Thus said, we must determine a course of action in kind. Shall we: a) take the remedy for sin that God has prescribed for our sin in Christ; or b) endure the penalty for our sin ourselves for time and eternity? Those who realize this truth embrace Jesus and look forward to Jesus’ next and final work...

### Hebrews 9:28 (Emphasis Mine)

28 . . . Christ was sacrificed **once** to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a **second time**, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

## PASSAGE #8

### Galatians 2:20

20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

**KEY** – The Cross marked the end of the life of Christ as He knew it, leading to a new and resurrected existence. As believers, the Cross marks the end of our lives as we have known them (i.e., lives characterized by sinfulness), ushering in new lives in Christ. In Him we become new creations (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17), and the lives we now live we live both for and through our Savior...

### 2 Corinthians 5:15

15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

### Titus 2:11–14

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

### 1 Peter 2:24–25

24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” 25 For “you were like sheep going astray,” but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

**QUOTE** – “The Christian life is a dying life. If we are in any real sense joined to Christ, the power of His death makes us dead to self and sin and the world. [Moreover] The Christian life is a life in which an indwelling Christ casts out, and therefore quickens, self. We gain ourselves when we lose ourselves. We then most truly live when we can say, ‘Not I, but Christ lives in me’” –MacLaren

## PASSAGE #9

### Hebrews 12:1–3

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

**KEY 1** – The Cross was a place of public shame, scorn and derision. Suspended between heaven and earth, Jesus made an easy target for any-and-all who sought to heap abuse upon Him—and heap abuse they most certainly did. Consider...

### Matthew 27:38–44

38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!” 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

#### **Q. What enabled Christ to endure the mockery and shame?**

**A.** His heart and mind remained fixed on the joy set before Him (v. 2).

#### **Q. What joy?**

**A1.** The joy of completing the task assigned to Him by His heavenly Father.

**A2.** The joy of imminent reunion with the Father He loved above all else.

**A3.** The knowledge that He had successfully made a way home for us.

**KEY 2** – Should this not encourage us amidst our moments of mockery and derision. The world still mocks those who carry a cross in His Name (cf. Matt. 16:24; John 15:20). Rather than focus on their scornful remarks, let us consider the joy(s) set before us!

#### **Q. What joy?**

**A1.** The joy of completing the task(s) assigned to us by our Father.

**A2.** The joy of ultimate reunion with the One we love/have loved above all else.

**A3.** The joy of knowing that to be away from the body is to be “finally and forever” home.

### Matthew 5:10–12

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

## PASSAGE #10

### 1 Corinthians 1:18 (Emphasis Mine)

18 For the message of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

**KEY** – Sadly, the message of the Cross, that Christ died to take away the sin of the world, is folly to the lost. Those who cannot and will not identify or recognize sin see little need for a Savior from it! As the adage states: “Getting some saved is easy. Getting them lost is the difficult part!” Yet the message of Christ is welcome news to the poor and spirit and mournful (cf. Matt. 5:3–4)! Though this world may despise and diminish its message, I will proclaim my agreement with the apostle Paul...

### Romans 1:16b (Emphasis Mine)

16 I am **not** ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.

## PASSAGE #11

### Galatians 6:14

14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

**KEY 1** – We boast about a great many things: **a)** prestige; **b)** power; **c)** prosperity; **d)** prowess; or **e)** appearance. Yet every one of these worldly elements has an expiration date, so why choose to boast in them at all? If we are going to revel in anything, let us boast in the Cross, which serves to deliver us from this world that we might be forever His (i.e., a relationship or experience that lasts throughout time and eternity)!

**KEY 2** – I wonder the degree to which we understand the heart of Paul, who boasted of and sought after Christ...

### Philippians 3:7–14

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

## PASSAGE #12

**KEY 1** – Allow me to close out this Good Friday Service with one final selection...

### **1 Corinthians 11:23–26 (Paul to the Church at Corinth, Emphasis Mine)**

23 . . . I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**KEY 2** – It was the desire of our Lord that His suffering and death be remembered by those who benefit from it. For twenty-plus centuries, the Church of Christ has taken the time to regularly consider and commemorate His atoning and vicarious sacrifice. This is an activity that shall continue until Christ Returns to establish His kingdom!

**Q. On this Good Friday 2023, would you share Communion with me in Christ, as a remembrance of His death?**

- 1)** This Wafer is a Symbol of His Body – Broken on Our Behalf (Please Receive)
- 2)** This Juice is a Symbol of His Blood – Shed for the Remission of Sin (Please Receive)

## CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to join us this evening. May the Lord bless you as we prepare to celebrate Easter!

- 1)** NO Men's Ministry tomorrow in light of the Easter weekend (April 15).
- 2)** Join us Easter Sunday at 10:30am to celebrate the Risen Christ. See you then.
- 3)** There is a collection of books, videos, etc., downstairs in the C. Room. Please take!