

## *Good Friday Personal Worship and Reflection*

*The Murfreesboro Baptist Church*

*April 7, 2023*

*6:00 – 7:30 p.m.*

The Good Friday service is a penitential service, yet it is also a celebration of the good news of the cross. Good Friday is the Friday within Holy Week, and is a time of fasting and penance, commemorating the suffering, crucifixion, and death of the Lord. For Christians, this holy day commemorates not just a historical event, but the sacrificial death of Christ, which along with the resurrection, comprises the heart of the Christian faith.

"[Believers] are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as expiation, through faith, by his blood... (Romans 3:24-25, NRSV).

### *The Preparation*

As you take a seat, take the time you need to prepare yourself to encounter God. Listen to the music. Take some deep cleansing breaths. Allow the thoughts of the day to pass away. Be still. Become aware of the presence of God.

### *The Invocation*

*Jesus our advocate, in the darkness of Gethsemane, you wept for us. Shedding tears of blood, You shared our pain. Jesus our redeemer, on the way to the Cross, You suffered for us. Tortured, spat upon and despised, You carried our burdens. Jesus our Savior, on the hill of Calvary, You died for us. Crucified and hung upon a tree, You released us into freedom. Son of the living God, Redeemer, Savior, Advocate, through the journey of suffering, in the place of darkness, You overcame death forever, and brought us into newness of life. Amen.*

### *The Meditation*

The disciples were in a daze. For the first time they weren't celebrating the Passover as prescribed in the Law of Moses. Jesus had arranged that an upper room be prepared for this special meal together, the meal they would share together before he would suffer. This meal has characteristics of the Passover. But it differs in a number of ways, a key being the bread and the wine at the center of it. And Jesus taking the bread declared it to be his body broken for them. The cup Jesus declared as his blood poured out for them. His disciples surely could make no sense out of this at all. This seemed to them to indicate that Jesus was not the Messiah after all.

Yet something powerful held them there. A new fellowship was being formed around a new table. And for a new world. Jesus indeed is the food (N.T. Wright). The life of the new creation is in him, and for the world.

The disciples certainly looked back on this with reverence and awe. But they experienced it surely with fear, bewilderment, yet a kind of captivating fascination. Jesus was in their midst in a way that from now on by the Spirit he would continue to be whenever they would share this meal together. It appears the early church did it at least weekly, and probably many of them did it even more frequently. This meal is at the center of our faith. Jesus died for us to give us his very life. So that we share in his life through his death, and we live in a fellowship with him and with all who are in him.

## *The Old Testament Lesson*

### **Exodus 12:5 -14**

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight. They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

## *The Gospel Lesson*

### **Luke 22: 17-23**

Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; <sup>18</sup> for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." <sup>19</sup> Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>20</sup> And he did the same with the cup

after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. <sup>21</sup> But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!” <sup>23</sup> Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

### ***The Prayer of Confession***

Generous God, you gave us life that we might choose to live it to your honor and glory, blessing us with untold opportunities to grow spiritually. But we have often chosen to go our own way, misusing many of the precious moments and days allotted to us. You gave Jesus the Christ, Savior, counselor, and companion, as well as judge. But in spite of this greatest of all advantages, we continue to make choices in accord with our own will, for our own pleasure and self-serving ends. Forgive us the sins of pride and fear. Forgive us for ignoring Jesus’ first claim upon our lives and for being so slow to learn the lessons of faith, obedience, and self-sacrificial love. Amen.

### ***The Words of Assurance***

**Psalm 13:5-6** But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

### ***I John 1:9***

If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ***Believe the good news of the Gospel: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.***

### ***Come and Share Communion***

You are invited to go to the table with the water basin and pitcher where the minister will wash your hands symbolizing the forgiveness we receive from Christ and receive communion symbolizing the sacrificial love of Christ for you. Please return to your seat if you wish to spend a moment in personal reflection and prayer.

### ***Blessing and Benediction***

*Depart, trusting that God who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all, will destroy the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. Watch and wait for the Lord, who has promised to swallow up death forever, wipe away all tears, and remove the reproach of His people from the earth. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

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