

Good Friday Service – OT Prophecy

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(30 minutes before service, various candles are lit around room.

*Until service begins, keep up M/M Slide: "**Please enter the worship center quietly. Use these moments for silent prayer.**"*)

Song: "Be Unto Your Name" (*Light 7 Main Candles & Snuff Side Candles)

Set the Pace & Prayer

Good evening, and welcome to this special Good Friday service. When you think back on the history of the Church, it seems strange to call the day "good." After all, it was a day that was preceded by unmet expectations, betrayal, deception, and ultimately . . . it was a day of death. But remember, in the midst of all the evil that happened, God was at work and His will was accomplished. God is still at work! He is still working and changing lives, and we have gathered in this place to consider His great work of redemption.¹ The God of hope offers us peace and forgiveness in the midst of darkness, evil, suffering, confusion, and pain.

As saints of God, we quietly gather tonight to remember and give thanks for the sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As this Good Friday service unfolds, we will listen to Scripture passages and devotional readings, share the Lord's Table, and sing together.

Our service is entitled, "**Anticipation & Revelation of the Cross.**" We will focus on Old Testament prophecy that predicts the cross and New Testament Gospel accounts of fulfillment.

This service can also be called Tenebrae (which means darkness/gloom). You will notice that this room will progressively get darker. 7 Readers will walk us through Scripture which anticipates and reveals the cross of Christ. After each of the readings, 1 of the 7 candles will be snuffed out 1 at a time. When the last candle is out, we will be left in silent darkness. After a time of solitude, you will be prompted on the screen that our worship service has concluded. Please quietly get up from your seat, and without talking to anyone else, leave the worship center in silence and drive home safely. We will return on Easter Sunday to celebrate the resurrection.

(On the Screen, Project the 7 statements). We have 7 goals tonight: 1) Let us **reflect** on Scripture which anticipates and reveals the cross of Christ. 2) Let us **remember** the sacrifice of Jesus Christ & suffering he endured. 3) Let us **recognize** the seriousness of sin & penalty that we deserve. 4) Let us **repent**, turn from sin, and turn to the Lord for forgiveness. 5) Let us **realize** the greatness of our Triune God – To see His character, holiness, justice, wrath, love, mercy & grace. 6) Let us **respond** to the Lord in reverent worship, singing, and prayer. 7) Let us **return** on Easter Sunday in hope of the resurrection. *(Screen goes black).* **Prayer.**

On Screen:

- 1) Let us **reflect** on Scripture which anticipates and reveals the cross.
- 2) Let us **remember** the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- 3) Let us **recognize** the seriousness of sin.
- 4) Let us **repent** and turn to God for forgiveness.
- 5) Let us **realize** the greatness of our Triune God.
- 6) Let us **respond** to the Lord in reverent worship, singing, and prayer.
- 7) Let us **return** on Easter Sunday in hope of the resurrection.

¹ These statements are adapted from a message by Harry Shields of Calvary Bible Church in Neenah, WI.

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Reading 1: The Curse of Sin (Genesis 3:14, 15)

When God, the architect of the universe, set out to create everything, he made man the pinnacle of creation. He made him with a very specific purpose, namely to worship, serve, and glorify God for eternity. However, the fate of creation and the worship of God were both contingent upon man's obedience in the garden. This beautiful, epic story of creation took a sad turn when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Their disobedience resulted from the persuasive influence of the devil, a fallen angel masquerading as a serpent. So when God placed a curse upon Adam and Eve, he also cursed the Serpent.

The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

This tragic account details the collapse of creation and godly order. When man sinned under the sway of the devil, it impaired all of creation's ability to glory and praise the Creator. Yet God had a plan to restore His people as well the rest of His creation. There was coming an offspring from Adam and Eve who would bruise the head of the serpent. This is the first glimpse of God's mission to rescue his people in the Bible.

God's rescue plan revolved around a person, Jesus of Nazareth, the promised offspring of Adam and Eve. And though the serpent did indeed bruise the heel of Jesus, Jesus crushed the head of the serpent when he died on the cross and rose from the grave. The Apostle Paul explains that Jesus' work on the cross disarmed the rulers and authorities, putting them to open shame by triumphing over them (Col 2:15). As the writer of Hebrews reminds us, through death Jesus destroyed "the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil. [And he delivered] all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Heb 2:14). Yes, the devil would bruise Jesus' heel, but through his work on the cross, Jesus destroyed and shamed the devil.

(Reader then snuffs out Dark Candle #1 [on far stage right] and is seated).

Reading 2: The Savior Lifted Up (Numbers 21:6-8)

A long time after the account in Genesis, God rescued His people, Israel, from Egyptian slavery. His plan for Israel was for them to dwell in a special place that God had prepared for them. Yet, they stubbornly refused to cooperate with God's gracious plan. They even became impatient and grumbled against God and against God's prophet, Moses.

Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live."

The Lord was at work directing and refining his people to make them better worshippers. Throughout Israel's history, the Lord redemptively used many different methods to help them call upon him, sometimes even painful events. God used this fiery serpent to direct the people to something greater, to God's appointed plan of deliverance. When the people of Israel obeyed God and fixed their gaze upon the serpent, they were foreshadowing the crucifixion of Jesus who would one day be hoisted up on a cross for everyone

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to fix their gaze upon. Jesus explained this idea to Nicodemus, a prestigious Pharisee in the first century. He said, “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (Jn 3:14-15). Just as Israel’s deliverance depended upon gazing at the crafted fiery serpent on a pole, so our deliverance depends upon our gazing at Jesus who was raised up on the cross to die for our sins.

(Reader then snuffs out Dark Candle #2 [on far stage left] and is seated).

Song: “Worthy is the Lamb”

Lord’s Table

Reading 3: Lament of Suffering (Psalm 22:1, 14-19)

Indeed, Jesus would be lifted up on the cross, but not in glory and not in joy. Rather, he would be physically hoisted up in shame and torment. The cross was painful in a way that no other human could ever appreciate... in a way that completely transcends physical pain. He suffered the wrath of God both physically and spiritually. In his final words on the cross, Jesus quoted from and alluded to Psalm 22 where King David lamented his own suffering and simultaneously foreshadowed the agony that Jesus would experience on the cross.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet--I can count all my bones-- they stare and gloat over me; they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

David’s agony on the cross was merely a prelude, a shadow, to Jesus’ experience. In some sense, David could say his enemies had pierced his hands and feet, but Jesus had physical nails driven through his hands and feet to hold his aching body on the cross. In the NT, Matthew informs us that the onlookers to Jesus’ crucifixion cast lots for his clothes and divided his garments among them just as David mentioned (Mt 27:35). They also circled around him and mocked him as David mentioned. They were laughing at Jesus, saying “He saved others but he cannot save himself” and “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now” (Mt 27:39-44). It is striking how detailed David’s Psalm is for understanding Jesus’ agony on the cross. It offers a penetrating glimpse into the misery that Jesus endured to rescue his people.

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #3 [2nd candle in from stage right] and is seated).

Prayer & Serve Bread

Song: “How Deep the Father’s Love”

Eat Bread

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Reading 4: Betrayal and Agony (Psalm 41:9; 69:21)

How did it come to this? How did this man who radiated the love of God, indeed, this man who was God, get hoisted onto the cross to die a shameful death? Well, just as Jesus would bruise the head of the serpent from Genesis, the serpent also struck the heel of Jesus. Determined to destroy Jesus, the serpent used a close friend of Jesus to betray him, one of the most sinister of all sins. Judas, a man who followed and ministered with Jesus for a good while, asked the chief priests who wanted to kill Jesus, “What will you give me if I deliver him over to you? And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment, he sought an opportunity to betray him” (Mt 26:14-16). When the time comes for Judas to hand Jesus over, Jesus recalls and cites Psalm 41:9, showing that even Judas’ wicked act, orchestrated by the devil himself, was foreshadowed in the OT.

Psalm 41:9 – Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

As if betrayal and an agonizing death on the cross were not enough, Jesus received sour wine to drink in his dying moments on the cross when he told his executioners that he was thirsty. “A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth” (Jn 19:29). This was to fulfill Psalm 69:21, where David writes,

Psalm 69:21 – They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink.

This is certainly no way for a loving king to be treated it would seem.

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #4 [2nd candle in from stage left] and is seated).

Prayer & Serve Cup

Song: “When I Survey”

Drink Cup

(*Stage/House Lights fade LOW.)

Reading 5: Man of Sorrows (Isaiah 53:1-12)

Betrayal... scoffing... mocking... a painful crown of thorns pressed into his skull... a spear in his side... sour wine to drink in his dying moments... crucifixion on a cross. Jesus was supposed to be a hero, a deliverer, but it appears he was defeated. And indeed, his defeat would be his victory, as His Father would vindicate him and raise him from the dead. However, in his first Advent, he could be called the man of sorrows. The prophet Isaiah prophesied about this man of sorrows around 700 years before Christ. Isaiah spoke to a broken and battered nation. He told them that God would indeed rescue his people, and he would do so through a man of sorrows, born of a virgin. This man is Jesus. Isaiah writes:

Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

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As Isaiah pointed out, Jesus' agony on the cross was not merely the handiwork of the devil. Rather, Jesus was smitten by God. It was God, the Father's will, that Jesus would face the cross in order to appease His own wrathful judgment towards us because of our sin. Isaiah goes on:

But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

As Isaiah prophesied and the NT Gospels inform us, Jesus was crucified with robbers on his right and left, as a common criminal. But when he died, Joseph of Arimethea, a wealthy man who was a disciple of Jesus, requested the body from Pilate and placed Jesus in his own tomb fulfilling what Isaiah spoke 700 years earlier about Jesus dying with the wicked and being with a rich man in his death (Mt 27:57-61).

Isaiah continues: *Yet [in all this] it was the will of the LORD to crush him; [the LORD] has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities... he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.*

This man of sorrows, named Jesus Christ, completely and eternally absorbed our defeat... our sorrow... our misery... and our eternal death. And in their place he offers victory, peace with God, overwhelming joy, and life eternal.

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #5 [3^d candle in from stage right] and is seated).

Reading 6: Joy and Mourning for the King (Zechariah 9:9; 11:11-13; 12:10)

Zechariah, a prophet to the nation of Judah who prophesied nearly 550 years before Jesus, foretold of a coming king who would rescue Jerusalem and bring peace to God's people. When the Israelites returned from Babylonian captivity to a dilapidated Jerusalem, Zechariah reminded them that God's still had a great plan for their future, saying,

9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

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What would be a future event for Judah in the 6th century B.C. was a present reality for first century Jews during Jesus' day. When he was preparing to enter Jerusalem, Jesus instructed his disciples to bring him a donkey and colt to fulfill this prophecy in Zechariah.

Matthew 21:6-11: *The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and put on them their cloaks, and he sat on them. Most of the crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee."*

Zechariah's prophecies show up in other places in the Gospels as well. When the Apostle John writes his Gospel, detailing Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, he quotes from Zechariah. John saw this text as powerful evidence that the Messiah was indeed Jesus. God says through the prophet Zechariah,

12:10 And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

The people will look on Jesus, the pierced one, the suffering servant, and they will mourn for him with the affection that one mourns for an only child. When they look to him, they are looking to the LORD.

(Reader snuffs out Dark Candle #6 [3rd candle in from stage left] and is seated).

Song: "Blessed Redeemer"

*(*At close of song, musicians turn OFF all lights on music stands).*

*(*Cross Light Fades OFF . . . All stage/house lights are already OFF).*

Reading 7: Dead and Buried (Jonah 1:15-17)

Why would the king of glory subject himself to such pain and torture? Why would he allow himself to be treated in such a humiliating way?

Even with all the biblical pieces of the puzzle, we will never completely understand what Jesus went through for us. When he died, he was buried in a tomb to which he compared with Jonah's time in the belly of the great sea monster:

Matthew 12:38-40: *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered [Jesus], saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But [Jesus] answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

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You know about Jonah don't you, the stubborn and rebellious prophet who tried to run from the Lord? While foolishly on a ship fleeing from God's will, the sailors threw Jonah overboard in an effort to calm the tempestuous seas.

Jonah 1:15-17: So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

It would seem the fate of God's rescue mission was grim. For a period of three days, Jesus was nowhere to be found. How can a hero, a deliverer, rescue anybody when he's in the grave?

For three days, Jesus' followers are plagued with doubt and confusion. They are overcome with sadness and grief.

Jesus' disciples have fled into the night. Before today, they were convinced Jesus was the Messiah. Soon after Jesus' death, two of the anguished disciples said, "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21). Surely it would have been him. Jesus was the great teacher, healer, and miracle worker. There was no one like Him in all the earth. They were convinced Jesus was the great Messiah who would overthrow Rome and begin a new kingdom. But their great leader is now dead. He was arrested, tried, led off to die, crucified between two thieves, and buried in a nearby tomb for three days. What now?

Little did they know that hope was coming. Light was around the corner. On the third day, joy would come in the morning. Questions would be answered. Doubts would be stilled. Grief would cease. Joy would come in the morning. Little did they know.

But for now, this is a time of doubt and confusion. This is a time of sadness and grief.

(Reader turns off lecturn light).

(Reader then snuffs out White Candle #7 [stage center] and is seated).

*(After 1 minute of silent darkness, Bring up last M/M Slide: **"You are dismissed. Please leave the worship center in silence. Let us return on Easter Sunday remembering the hope of the resurrection."** Bring up House Lights a little.)*

[Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is referenced from the English Standard Version, ESV. © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers]