

In Domine Jesu

THIS IS TRULY A GOOD FRIDAY

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

For Christians who have learned to grasp the central message of God's Word – Christ-crucified for the sins of the whole world – this is an aptly named day. This is a good day for sinners who know their sins, who sorrow over them, and who will to turn from them. This is the day to remember how God gives repentant sinners, you, His power to turn from sin and walk in newness of life. That makes this a Good Friday to hear about God's forgiveness which comes from His shedding His blood, into death, to cover over your sins.

The entire Church Year has been moving us as hearers of God's Word, to this most important point in all of history. From the recounting of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the first Sunday of Advent, to Palm Sunday's recounting of that same event, God the Holy Spirit has been preparing us for that which we have heard today. From the Lord's services to us in this place this week up to and including today, God has told the Son's Passion narrative three times, from three different inspired accounts. The salvation records proclaimed by St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. John have given us the eternal Truth from three different viewpoints. Psalms, Old Testament, and Epistle readings from Tuesday until today have shown prophecy declared of the Savior. We have heard that prophecy has been fulfilled in Jesus. We have learned that prophecy is enacted in the Church by the Holy Spirit working

through the Word of God. Hear again as He works through these words, translated from St. John's record, the Word of God which declares the heart and soul of this Good Friday:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were having been finished, that the Scripture may have been finished, continues to say, "I thirst...." When then He received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is finished!" Then, having bowed the Head, He handed over the Spirit.¹

The central moment in all history is summed up by one word from Jesus, *Τετέλοται*. Many of you have become acute hearers of the Word as it is proclaimed in this place and at the Campus Christian Center. As hearing students of Jesus through His declared Word, you have learned to listen for repetitions of words in Scripture translations. (If not, be more attentive. God speaks through His Word and has declared that Faith comes by hearing! Repent and believe that Jesus the Christ was crucified unto death for you)!

So, we have one word, *Τετέλοται*, in three forms, translated consistently in the forty-five words of our day's theme text. *Finished, finished, and finished* sound forth from the text. It is declared in the passive voice each time. That use indicates that God's will for sinners was being done. The lone word declares that everything needed for the whole world's salvation, for your salvation and the forgiveness of your sins, was completed in Jesus' life into death on the cross.

¹ John 19: 28, 30.

There is nothing you need do, not a thing you can do, think, or say that can add anything to that which Jesus has done for you. His proclamation of God dying in your sins: *Τετέλοται*, "It is finished." says it all! That is Good News to help us keep this as a Good Friday.

As you have repeatedly heard, learned, believed, and confessed, that which God says is true. He has willed that He cannot lie. His Word stands firm this day, for you, for me, for the whole world, "It is finished."

That is Good News! Because of Jesus' word from the Cross recorded in John's Gospel, you may know that Jesus would rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. That is because you have other records of Scripture in which you may hear the Lord's Promise of the Word's fulfillment, its finish, in Jesus the Christ.² God's Promise to make the Day of His death the Good Day was recounted for you in the text from Isaiah which you heard in today's first reading:

*He caused to pour out into death His soul, and with the ones transgressing (He) was numbered, yet He the sin of many bore; for the ones transgressing, He caused to make intercession.*³

That is Good News! Jesus finished into death the prophecy of Isaiah. The Christ's death was one with which sinners die. From that death He became the effective and efficient cause of intercession for we who continue transgressing God's Holy Word. To do that, He had to be raised from the dead!

² Cf. *Luke* 12:50; *John* 10:17-18; *Job* 19:26.

³ *Isaiah* 53:12b

That Good News led us to God's Word in the second reading of the Day. There the Holy Spirit declares that the Promise of the death of the Messiah included the reality of a finished Promise. It spoke of His resurrection and that of those who believe in Him. Because Jesus declared that "It is finished" in Himself, our text declared that you are free to *no longer continually be living to yourselves, but to the One (Who) for all of you died and was raised.*⁴

That means that this is a Good Friday for you, and I, and all the faithful. We are free to die to sin and selfish desires that the New Man may rise up in us. As many have heard this week, this is a good time to return to the font. It reminds us that, in Holy Baptism, we were given a part in the death and resurrection of Jesus. That God worked in us through the Water and the Word. It is a Good Friday to remember that because Jesus died, you who believe and confess in Him as your Savior from sin, death, and hell even now have eternal blessed life.

You are free to hold that in mind for the rest of this Lord's service, and unto the end of your mortal days. In a few moments, as the Holy Spirit causes you to hold the Victory of Christ on that first Good Friday in your thoughts, you are going to hear God's charges against you. In the Reproaches, God lays out the gifts He has given you, and your response to them. Through the lone voice of a man, you will petition God for forgiveness, even as He rebukes you. Then, as God's people united with one

⁴ II Corinthians 5:15b.

voice, you will respond with the Gospel that you believe. That is, that Jesus is the pure and holy Lamb sacrificed for your sins, to take away your despair at the accusations hurled against you on account of your sinfulness.

Then, you will be freed again by the Word of God to remember that, for you who believe, this is truly a Good Friday. You will give God praise and glory in His resurrection, out of His death that brings joy to repentant sinners. In the proclaimed realities of the first Good Friday, you will be free to depart this place in silence, having sung of the honor you give to God for Jesus' victory on the cross for you:

*To Thee, eternal Three in One,
Let homage meet by all be done;
As by the cross Thou dost restore,
So guide and keep us evermore.⁵*

Christ is crucified for you! *Τετέλοται!*

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Good Friday, Noon (*LSB One-Year Series*)

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; II Corinthians 5:14-21; John 18:1-19:42

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Paster Michael L. Merhouse

Soli Deo Gloria

⁵ Fortunatis, Venantius Honorius. *Lutheran Service Book*, “The Royal Banners Forward Go,” tr. John Mason Neale, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006, 455 v. 6.