

IN NOMINE JESU

JESUS WAS BUSY ON OUR BEHALF

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

According to NOAA (the National Oceanographic Atmospheric Association), sunset was at 7:01 PM. That means, according to Old Testament reckoning, Holy Saturday has begun. If this were the location of Jesus' Passion, death, and burial, in the first century AD, His body would be in the tomb. Everything you heard in the Gospel reading you just heard would have been accomplished.

About six hours have elapsed since the Reproaches of God, and the congregation's pleas for mercy were chanted here. Just a quarter of a day has gone by from the procession of the cross to the Altar Table bared and emptied last night. A lot has gone on today in the remembrance of the Church.

In addition, as some of you have heard throughout this week, a lot of Old Testament Scripture has been reported to have been fulfilled in Jesus. That continues tonight. The three Psalms proclaimed for this evening declare the Christ, the Suffering Servant, His death and resurrection. Hear now each of them speak of Him, from the order in which they fall in our bulletins (there is

much more Christ in them than these, but there are four more services yet to come in which we may hear of Him):

*Into Your Hand I cause to commit My Spirit;
You have redeemed Me, O YHWH, God (Who is) faithful.¹*

*All of you kiss (the) Son,
lest He be angry and all of you perish in (the) way.
For is quickly kindled, His wrath.
Blessed (are) all who (are taking) refuge In Him.²*

*And now, My Head shall be lifted up above My enemies round about
Me;
And I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to YVHW.³*

It is biblically defensible to maintain that the second and third Psalms we recited tonight are all about Christ. Even the first has a lot about Him in its lines. That they are in tonight's service of Lights indicates that you may find in the hearing of the Christ in them both Light in the darkness of sin, and hope that as they were fulfilled in Him, they shall be fulfilled in you.

Think of the texts just cited in these ways. Because Jesus commended His Spirit into the Hand of the Father, those who are united with Christ are free to do the same. Though many of you may not have thought about it, this is just

¹ Psalm 31:6.

² Psalm 2:12.

³ Psalm 27:6.

what the Church says with Christians who are dying the Faith. As part of the “Commendation of the Dying,” we may (and often do) declare words like these:

*Into Your Hand I cause to commit My Spirit;
You have redeemed Me, O YHWH, God (Who is) faithful.⁴*

Those words seem to come easily to those who know that they have been redeemed, that is “bought back” from death even as they are dying. They may know this, you may know this, because you have already died with Christ. The thought is this: I can confess this because the God Who, even as Jesus’ body lie in death’s sleep, raised Him from the dead, that God will raise me from the dead.

God the Father, through the work of the Life-Giver, God the Holy Spirit, caused to restore life to Jesus. This He did through the Word which declared such would happen. God through the Word then, has already caused to raise you from the dead. For the Christian: eternal death and separation from God are not to be your lot in eternity. The Holy Spirit leads you to believe the revealed truth that God will someday, through the Promise of His Word, raise your body from the dust to live with Him forever.

Let us move our thinking to the second Psalm verse for the evening. In those lines, we have a description of that which surely went on sometime on

⁴ *Psalm 31:6.*

Holy Saturday. That is, Jesus before the stone was rolled away from the Tomb, Jesus descended into the place of the dead. You confess that in the Creeds – another reason to never let them be removed from the Lord’s Public Services.

In His descent, the place of the dead was opened. Those there, who had rejected the Lord’s Anointed One, were bound more tightly for the Day of Judgment. They had failed to fulfill the words of the second Psalm while they lived in their mortal bodies. They rejected the Son, which is reflected in failing to give Him the kiss of friendship and honor. They will eternally reap His unbridled fiery anger, as our verse declares:

*All of you kiss (the) Son,
lest He be angry and all of you perish in (the) way.
For is quickly kindled, His wrath.
Blessed (are) all who (are taking) refuge In Him.⁵*

On the other hand, the last line of that verse describes those who had waited and fallen asleep in the Faith. Those who had died in the Faith of the Christ to come, witnessed the Christ that Holy Saturday. He released them from their bonds.

Because of that which Christ did after the tomb was sealed and before it was opened, you are free to be blessed by God. That is so, even as you

⁵ Psalm 2:12.

take refuge in Him, in His Word. That brings us to the third Psalm verse for tonight's proclamation.

*And now, My Head shall be lifted up above My enemies round about
Me;
And I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to YVHW.⁶*

In the opening line, we hear of Christ on the cross, in His resurrection from the dead, and in His ascension. First, His head, pierced by the crown of thorns, was lifted above His enemies – the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles at the foot of the cross. Second, His head was lifted from the grave sometime that Holy Saturday into Resurrection Sunday, so that you may know that our last enemy, death, is beneath Jesus. Third, in His Ascension, Jesus' holy Head was placed above all His enemies, including those above the earth, on the earth, and under the earth.

Finally, you may know that where the Head is, so is the Body. That means that you who are attached to Christ are above all your enemies. That sets you free to offer sacrifices – of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving – in joy. Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension are your death, resurrection, and ascension. That truth frees you to sing and make melody to the Lord.

⁶ Psalm 27:6.

Much about Christ and those who are one with Him has been declared in tonight's public service. As a matter of practice, every year on this evening for several years, whether it has been preached or not, we have been reciting the reasons the Second Person of the Holy Trinity came into this world. Just before this the Office Hymn and this sermon, in response to the Gospel Passion narrative, we said these words responsively:

P: We have an advocate with the Father; Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

C: He was delivered up to death; He was delivered for the sins of the people.

P: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is put away.⁷

The first thing our summary declares is that Jesus is our Advocate. That word reflects in legal usage. Advocate Jesus is our Defense Attorney. He stands before the Father Who is seated on His throne as Judge. Jesus intercedes on our behalf. In so doing, the Father looks at Him, His beloved Son, and does not see us in our sins.

The next half line tells us why: Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. That word means that His death both took away the wrath of God at our sins and at us as sinners, and that Jesus paid the price for our sins. Our Advocate,

⁷ *1 John 2:1-2; (Mark 10:33); Psalm 32:1.*

our Defender, took our punishment on Himself. Jesus, from the Cross, in His dying in our sins, declared, "It is finished!" That means that everything needful to bring us an acquittal before God the Eternal Judge has been presented before Him.

We declare, every year and in lives lived daily under the Cross, that Jesus, though handed over into death, did not die for Himself. Rather, He died for you, most especially for you who believe. In His death all the record of your trespasses against God's Word were removed. All the times you have crossed the line of the Word and fallen into sin have been forgiven. In His death, your sin has been put away. All of those things, and more, are the truths we proclaim this night.

We have again heard that, even in His death, Jesus was busy on our behalf. Such truths move us to sing the Canticle for the day, the song of Mary. Those words of joy come immediately after these words which declare your state before the Judge in heaven because of the first Good Friday and Holy Saturday:

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

Good Friday Tenebrae (LSB One-year series)

Psalms 31; 2; 27; John 19

April 18, 2014

Pastor Michael A. Morehouse

Soli Deo Gloria