

INTROIT

*P: Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows:*

**C: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.**

*P: All we like sheep have gone astray:*

**C: and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.**

*P: Hear my prayer, O Lord:*

**C: and let my cry come unto Thee.**

..... OR .....

*P: God Forbid that I should glory:*

**C: save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

*P: In Him is salvation, life, and resurrection from the dead:*

**C: by Him we are redeemed and set at liberty.**

*P: God be merciful unto us and bless us:*

**C: and cause His face to shine upon us.**

COLLECT (1 of 3 in the Agenda)

Almighty God, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed and given up into the hands of wicked men and to suffer death upon the cross: through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

GRADUAL / TRACT

*P: Reproach hath broken My heart, and I am full of heaviness:*

**C: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters and found none.**

*P: It is nothing to you, all ye that pass by?:*

**C: Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger.**

*P: He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities:*

**C: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.**

The Old Testament

Isaiah 50:6-9

I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together: who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? Lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

The Epistle

Revelation 5:6-10

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the

seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

## **The Holy Gospel**

**St. Matthew 27:33-54**

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

---

## Matthew 27:33-54 — “My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?”

### INTRODUCTION

- I. HE TRUSTED IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW, IF HE WILL HAVE HIM
- II. MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?
- III. TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD

### CONCLUSION

Matthew 27:33-54 — “My God, My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The sermon text is Matthew 27:33-54:

**And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.**

**Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**

**And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.**

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

Good Friday is the day of new life, new life for sinners who by nature are dead in their trespasses and sins. (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13). Good Friday is the day that God made Himself to be sin for us so that our sin would be punished and redeemed in His body on the cross. Good Friday is truly the day of goodness, where the One who is Good and whose Mercy endures forever, proved once and for all that Good triumphs over Evil.

Our text for this day is from the second series appointed for the observance of Good Friday. This text is often misunderstood. The fullness of what is declared for us is often overshadowed by our presuppositions. So, today we shall listen anew and hear again what God has accomplished for us and the new life that He has won for us in His own body on the cross in the place of the Skull.

I. HE TRUSTED IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER HIM NOW, IF HE WILL HAVE HIM

The opening paragraph of our text reveals much about the misconceptions that we as sinful humans hold regarding who Jesus really is.

**And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull, They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink. And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots. And sitting down they watched him there; And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left. And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.**

Matthew records the mockery that mankind displays toward the God of grace, mercy, and peace. From the very beginning, God has foretold the coming of Jesus, who is Immanuel, *with us God*. At the baptism of Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit publicly declared Jesus. He is God the Son come in the flesh to save us. He is the promised Seed of the Woman who was foretold as the one who would crush the head of the serpent.

Is it not a thing of wonder that the place to which they took Jesus to crucify Him was called the place of the skull? Here, through His crucifixion, Satan, the head of the serpent was crushed and everlastingly defeated by Jesus. Here, the One to whom all the torah and prophets testify, the One whom the Father and the Spirit testified, the One attested by signs and wonders, the One who preached peace to the captives, this one was completely misunderstood and rejected, mocked and tortured, by the very people to whom He was promised.

Pilate, the Roman governor, a Gentile unbeliever, acknowledged Jesus as the King of the Jews. Yet those to whom Jesus came rejected Him right up to the very end, saying, **“Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.”** The religious leaders also rejected Him, saying, **“He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”**

How telling this is! For what do they condemn Him? For what reason do they reject

Him? **“He trusted God!”** Truly this is the reason that Jesus was rejected: **He trusted God.** Jesus was rejected as the one who truly embraced and taught and lived the one true faith, the faith of the Scriptures, the faith that God gives. This faith Jesus had not because He was taught it, but because He was born with it, from eternity. In Him the fullness of the Godhead dwells. For Jesus not to trust God would be to deny Himself! He is God, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He is God, who was made to be man by His own Word.

Matthew emphasizes that His trusting God is what brought Jesus to the place of the skull. For Jesus is not only true God, but also true Man. As Man, Jesus has a true body and a true mind and a true spirit. In the body of Jesus, God and Man are truly reconciled as one. His very person is the reconciliation that God worked for mankind. The faith of Jesus is the means by which we are saved. It is His faith by which we are reconciled. It is His faith that brought Jesus to Golgotha, the place of the skull. It is His faith that cried out in our place. It is His faith that is imparted with the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism. It is His faith that generates faith in us so that we are generated through the water and the Spirit to be made to be sons of God in communion with Him.

It is this faith, born or carried in the person of the Son that was rejected. It is this Jesus who is rejected, the One who is truly God and truly Man in one person. People today still mock this Jesus and look for another savior. People today still fail to trust in the God who for our sake has made Himself Man, in order to live for us the life that in His mercy He desires to give to us. Yes, God Himself lived Man’s life and died Man’s death, in order that we might live in Him through the faith of Jesus.

## II. MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?

**Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.**

This may be the most misunderstood and misapplied passage of all of the Scriptures. Can anyone find a single passage that declares that God abandoned Jesus? I’ve spent considerable time lately searching for such a passage, but have been unable to find one. Yet for most of my life I have heard it preached and have even preached it myself. But this is a gross misunderstanding that has caused much confusion regarding the person of Jesus. It has caused some to follow the chief priests and scribes and elders in rejecting and mocking the doctrine of Jesus as true God. It has caused some to speculate that the Word left Jesus so that only the Man died on the cross. But Jesus as Man alone is not Jesus. Jesus who is not God is not the promised Savior of Man. Unless God Himself died for us, we remain dead in our trespasses and sin.

What then does Matthew record in this text? He records what St. Paul also explains in 2 Corinthians 5:14-21:

**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for**

**them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

Truly, all were dead and so God in Christ died for all. In Christ, God joined Himself to Man, thus reconciling God and Man in the one person of Jesus the Christ. Having brought God and Man together again, God died as Man for the sake of all of mankind, taking the sin of the world so completely that God made Himself to be Sin.

This is what occurred in the sixth hour until the ninth hour. From the third hour, or 9:00 a.m., Jesus was crucified. By the sixth hour, or noon, the sin of the world had been taken by Jesus so fully that the light of God no longer showed in the world and darkness overcame the land. Sin, in the body of Jesus, was all that could be seen. The darkness of sin filled the person of Jesus. God Himself became dark with the world's sin so that He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us.

Jesus truly took our place on the cross. He truly took our sin. He truly took our identity and our curse. He was made to be our substitute. Our filth completely became His filth and our guilt became His guilt so that He cried out in our place, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”**

God did not abandon Jesus. God never abandons anyone. No. Sin cuts us off from God so that we can no longer see Him as anything but the holy and righteous Judge. Our sin condemns us. Our guilt overpowers us. But God does not abandon us. This is what is demonstrated in the birth of Jesus into the world. Far from abandoning mankind, God made Himself to be Man so as to be Immanuel, *with us God*.

But because of our sinfulness, we cannot know God with us. Rather, we can only see the consequences of sin in our lives and in the world. When these things weigh down upon us we cry out, **“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”**

But the fact that we cry out should teach us that God has not abandoned us. He continues to make Himself known so that we realize that He is the one to whom we must turn. In fact, in the moment that we cry out, He has already turned us. When we cry out, if we listen to the words that the Holy Spirit has put into our hearts, we will realize that God has turned us back to Him, that He has turned us from our sinfulness to His mercy.

On the cross, Jesus cried out as the Sinner of sinners. He truly took into Himself the sin of the world. This is another point that is often misunderstood. This is at least in part due to mistranslating John 1:29 as John the Baptist saying, **“Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”** What is actually recorded is, **“Behold, the Lamb of God, which lifts up the sin of the world.”** Yes, in His body on the cross, Jesus lifted up the sin of the world.

In His body on the cross Jesus truly took the sin of the world as His own and paid the price in our place. In his body on the cross Jesus truly took the sin of the world and suffered the curse in place of every single human being. But He did not take the sin of the world away from the world. The sin was taken as His own for all the world, but it is only in connection with the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit that the sin is actually taken away from the individual sinner. God's grace was worked for us by Jesus on the cross, but that grace is given to us and applied to us through the faith that the preaching of Christ crucified generates in us.

Jesus took our sin as His own so that by means of the power of the preaching of the Gospel we would be made to be or converted to be the righteousness of God in Christ. As the Gospel is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit brings the faith of Jesus into our hearts and faith is born in us. Through Baptism, this faith is made to be our own faith through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and by His entrance into us we are joined with Christ as sons of the Kingdom of God. With the preaching of the Word and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we are made to be reconciled with God through incorporation into the body of Christ, in which the fullness of the Godhead dwells.

Even on the cross, the fullness of the Godhead was in Christ. He cried out with the anguish of the blindness of our sin. Yet He nevertheless was one with God, even as He cried out in our place. Hebrews 5:7-10 declares this very plainly,

**Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.**

Yes, even on the cross, the faith of Jesus saved Him. He prayed as Man with the world's sin blinding Him to the presence of God so that in communion with Him we would likewise know to call God our Father, even when surrounded by the darkness of the world's sin. Matthew does not tell us, but Luke does, regarding those last words of Jesus when all was finished: **"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."** (Luke 23:46)

Here the Holy Spirit led Luke to assure us that the reconciliation of God and Man that God worked in the person of Jesus is never-ending. God did not abandon Jesus, never! God in Christ did take the fullness of the world's sin in His own person. God did carry the fullness of our griefs and sorrows in His own body on the cross and God was bruised in His own flesh for our iniquities, just as was foretold by Isaiah and as we confessed in the Introit. This was not a partial effort by only a part of God. Much less was it merely a partial payment by a mere man. This was truly God suffering and dying for us in our place. Thus the payment is truly sufficient to cover the entire debt of sin for everyone forevermore.

### III. TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD

**And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared**

**unto many. Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.**

This is what we reflected upon earlier in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where St. Paul says:

**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

This is why St. Paul confirms that when we eat of the bread and drink of the cup we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. This is why the Lord Jesus instituted the New Testament in His blood before He went to the cross in the place of the skull. Jesus gave His body of unity and His blood of forgiveness and life so to keep His fearful disciples safe even as they saw God made to be sin and to suffer and die. How could they understand? How would Peter forgive himself for denying Jesus even with cursing? How would the other disciples forgive themselves for abandoning their Lord in the garden? How could they know that they had not been cut off on account of their weaknesses and failings? They did not have to forgive themselves for they had been baptized into Christ's death and they had been strengthened and renewed by His body and blood. The power of the Word in connection with these sacraments kept them in faith even though they trembled with fear. They learned that faith is not the result of believing, but that believing is the result of the faith of Jesus which is ours as God's gift.

Amazingly, we hear from the centurion and those with him what the Jewish leaders refused to hear, **"Truly this was the Son of God."** It was not the life of Jesus that convinced people, but His death. It is not the example of Jesus throughout His earthly life that we are to follow, but rather the faith of Jesus by which He took the sin of the world and suffered and died in our stead. This is why the Sacrament of the Altar is not a proclamation of the Lord's life but of His death. Baptism joins us to Christ in His death and burial, so that being buried with Him in His death we also rise with Him to new life and the clean conscience given in Baptism, rising up to eat and drink the benefits that He purchased with His body and blood. Looking to the example of Jesus' life leaves people standing at the cross mocking Jesus with their own words and works. Looking to the example of Jesus as our High Priest who took the sin of the world and died as a sinner for us leaves us standing in awe confessing Him as the Son of God. This is why Jesus so eagerly instituted the Sacrament of the Altar and commanded that we do this often into His burial, that is, into our remembrance of being baptized into His death. Then, as we see Him and touch Him in the bread and the wine we cry out as did Thomas after the resurrection, **"My Lord and My God!"**

Having witnessed the crucifixion in the fullest manner possible, having overseen the very crucifixion itself, the centurion and those with him could not keep from acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God. It is the communion of the proclamation of His death that converts the soul. It is in the suffering and death of God as Man that the reconciliation that God worked in Christ is manifested beyond any doubt. In the body of Christ crucified we encounter the truth confessed by the Church as proclaimed by Moses, **"The Lord our God, the LORD One."** Truly, there is no other God than the one whom we know in Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

**“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”** Oh how we suffer on account of sin. Oh how God suffered for us in taking our sin! How could it be that the Lord Jesus would take the sin of the world so completely that on the cross in our stead He could no longer see anything but darkness and abandonment? Yet in His cry we hear the faith that God gives to us in Baptism. Even though sin blinded the one made to be sin for us from seeing God, Jesus nevertheless looked to God as **“My God!”** His emotions were not to be trusted. His emotions and His experience told Him that God had abandoned Him. Yet His faith knew otherwise. His faith knew that God does not abandon but Sin causes the separation. Truly we should treat this soberly. To think that God Himself would be so surrounded by the darkness of sin that He would cry out as if abandoned, this truly should pierce our hearts and souls. Truly we should be turned by this in our hearts to cry out to God as our God.

We often imagine that we are forgiven because we confess our sins. But the truth is that God’s forgiveness is the reason that we should confess our sins. For what power resides in our admission of our sins? No, rather the Holy Spirit moves us to believe that God has indeed taken our sin along with the sin of the entire world so that we confess our sins to the one who has carried them for us and promises to set us free from the griefs and sorrows that we carry on account of our sin. God commands us to acknowledge our sinfulness so that we may hear the absolution. We tend to misunderstand what this confession really is. This confession is the confession of God’s merciful desire to give to us what He purchased for us. It is not a choice on our part to draw near to God. Rather, it is the response that is generated in us as God draws near to us through His Word. Through the preaching and through the Sacraments, God draws near to us and changes us from unbelievers to believers. Then we respond by confessing the awakening that He has worked in us. As our sin-dead spirits rise up in the new life that the Spirit works in us, we confess our need for God’s forgiveness and He grants us the assurance that in Christ our greatest need is fulfilled.

So, when we find ourselves pressed down by the troubles and sorrows and griefs and pains of this sinful world, when we find ourselves feeling abandoned and standing all alone, when we doubt that anything matters anymore, when we can see no glimmer of light so that we cry out as though God had abandoned us, God calls us to come again to partake of the blessings of Baptism in the Holy Communion. For the word for remembrance is the same word for memorial or sepulcher. When Jesus says “do this often into the remembrance of Me,” He is saying that as we have been buried with Him into death, so we are to partake of the new life in His body and blood in the Holy Supper. As we come to His Table that He has prepared before us in the presence of our enemies, He anoints us with the oil of His grace, renewing us in the forgiveness by which we have life and hope. Here we partake of the fullest proclamation of His death and receive all that He has purchased for us even forevermore. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.