

Good Friday 10th April 2020
Prepared by Revd Bonnie Appleton

Readings: Psalm 22:1-21, Hebrews 4:14 – 16 and John Chapters 18 and 19 complete.

Collect for Good Friday:

Almighty Father,
look with mercy on this your family
for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed
and given up into the hands of sinners
and to suffer death upon the cross;
who is alive and glorified with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Reflection:

Firstly, I do hope that you are all 'staying safe', in 'lockdown', 'self-isolation' or being 'shielded'. We seem to have a lot of new words and phrases for our new 'normal' life.

Today we remember Christ upon the Cross as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. It seems only a moment since we were celebrating his birth and the fact that 'God is with us' and now we are remembering his death. But that doesn't negate the fact that God is still with us.

Perhaps it doesn't *feel* like that. Some of us, particularly those who live alone or who have lost loved ones recently for any reason, might feel abandoned by God but 'feeling' abandoned is different from 'being' abandoned.

Psalm 22 is quoted in John's account of the crucifixion but it is verse 18 'They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.' However, in Matthew's gospel it is quoted from the beginning 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Either way, Jesus feels abandoned and isolated in his affliction. Just like any of us feel, cooped up in our homes and unable to go out.

- It's scary because we don't know what will happen next – neither did Jesus.
- We feel things are now out of our control – so did Jesus.
- We may even think this is the end – so did Jesus.

And yet – Jesus trusted that God was with him, even in his darkest moment as he was dying. He had faith that God would do something miraculous and he was prepared to relax into his Father's arms and let God be God.

And that is exactly what we need to do – relax into the Father's arms and let God be God. This doesn't have to be the kind of thing that we grit our teeth and do, nor do we need to establish a fatalistic approach that says, 'What will be, will be.'

As Christians, we not only have confidence in God our Creator as a loving God, we also have confidence in Jesus Christ who lived and died and rose again to save us from the sin and evil and our own foolishness. We have it there in Hebrews 4:15 'For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin.' We have a sympathetic Saviour, who knows what we are going through! We can trust him and he will be with us whatever we have to face. Hebrews 4:16 says it so eloquently. Perhaps this is a verse that is worth learning and quoting at this very difficult time in our world....

'Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.'

This gives us the opportunity to pray for our world at this time and to have faith that God hears and responds to our prayers (not necessarily answering our prayers as we want but doing what is best for us.) However, if you don't ask, you won't get!

On this special day, let us remember the Christ who died for the sins of whole world, but as we do so let us also not forget that he rose again and I still with us in our current situation. May God bless you all and keep you safe and full of confidence in our Lord Jesus Christ.

You may want to sing the following:

1 It is a thing most wonderful
almost too wonderful to be
that God's own Son should come from heaven
and die to save a child like me.

2 And yet I know that it is true:
he came to this poor world below,
and wept and toiled, and mourned and died,
only because he loved us so.

3 I cannot tell how he could love
a child so weak and full of sin;
his love must be most wonderful
if he could die my love to win.

4 I sometimes think about the cross,
and shut my eyes, and try to see
the cruel nails, and crown of thorns,
and Jesus crucified for me.

5 But, even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part
of that great love which, like a fire,
is always burning in his heart.

6 How wonderful it is to see
my love for him so faint and poor,
but yet more wonderful to know
his love for me so free and sure.

7 And yet I want to love you, Lord:
O teach me how to grow in grace,
that I may love you more and more
until I see you face to face.

Jubilate Hymns version of 'It is a thing most wonderful', William Walsham How (1823 - 1897)
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Or

1 There is a green hill far away,
without a city wall,
where the dear Lord was crucified,
who died to save us all.

2 We may not know, we cannot tell,
what pains he had to bear;
but we believe it was for us
he hung and suffered there.

3 He died that we might be forgiv'n
he died to make us good,
that we might go at last to heav'n,
saved by his precious blood.

4 There was no other good enough
to pay the price of sin;
he only could unlock the gate
of heavn'n and let us in.

5 O dearly, dearly has he loved,
and we must love him too,
and trust in his redeeming blood,
and try his works to do.

Cecil Frances Alexander 1848