

Redeemed

Sermon Good Friday – April 15, 2022

Scripture Reading: John 19:16-30

Golden Verse: He said, “It is finished.” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. John 19:30/b

The final scene of the tragic and yet glorious Good Friday suffering unfolds before us from the Scripture. As we have heard, the dying Jesus speaks three more times at the last moments. All three of his sayings have deep meaning.

Paul, in Ephesians 3:17-18, says: *“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”*

I take the courage to say that Jesus’ last words show us the immeasurable dimensions of His cross where He suffered on Golgotha.

1) First scene:

As I picture my Lord Jesus, as He looks down from the cross to His mother Mary – this scene brings tears to my eyes.

When I was about 7 years old, by accident I fell into the river. I vividly remember, as I was sinking, I saw some fish around me. As I was going down, I remember the only thought I had in my mind. I was deeply sorry for my mother, realizing how much pain she will have when she hears that I died.

Suddenly, my brother Mike, who saw everything, jumped after me and saved my life.

At this point, I can imagine how Jesus felt on the cross seeing that His mother was there, watching Him suffering and bleeding to death. I cannot picture more pain and suffering than when a mother has to watch her son die.

Also, Jesus knew that His mother was counting on Him, to be there for her when she might get older, to support her. Mary, watching His son dying, knew that in those moments she lost her son physically forever.

I am wondering if, in those painful, confusing moments, Mary recalled what the angel said to her about Jesus: *“He will be great and will be called the Son of the*

Most High The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.” (Luke 1:32)

Did she recall what Simeon told her when she took the eight-day-old Jesus to the temple: *“Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: ‘This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.’”* (Luke 2:34)

Jesus, hanging, bleeding, and suffering on the cross, cared for His mother's future. For this, Jesus made the last connection between her mother and His disciple John. Jesus asked John to take care of His mother, and asked Mary, His mother, to accept John as her son. *“Woman, here is your son!”* And to the disciple, *“Here is your mother.”* (John 19:26-27) Under the cross, a new kind of commitment was born. With this, Jesus created a new spiritual connection among those who loved Him.

And this is the great mystery of the church as well. We here are a great spiritual family, the Calvin Family. We belong together as members of a large family, around the cross of Jesus.

We are together, not based on some kind of human sympathy, but we are bound together through the cross of Jesus. I often say that these types of relationships are stronger than blood relationships.

The bonds in this family are blessed by the cross of Jesus, who asked us to care for each other. Those who belong to Jesus, who believe in the crucified Jesus, cannot be alone.

Here, the cohesive bond is not the common blood but the cross of Golgotha. It is Christ's mystical unifying power that, beyond national borders, and linguistic and racial differences, brings us together into one great family. Indeed, this is a very mysterious brotherhood. We became siblings through the Holy Spirit. The broken body of Jesus at Golgotha and the blood that was shed on the cross make us ONE.

Now, Jesus is looking at you and me from the cross, saying: Behold, the one who sits next to you is your spiritual mother, or your spiritual son, your daughter, your sister.

But this togetherness is not only a gift but also a task, a responsibility. Jesus commands us to look at every widow, orphan, abandoned lonely soul, mourner, and helpless person as if he or she is our mother, our son, our sister, or our brother. All people in need are the sacred legacy of the dying Jesus to those who believe that Jesus died on the cross for the redemption of this world. Here is the horizontal dimension of the cross of Golgotha with such a wide embrace! Jesus' two arms outstretched on the cross embrace all of us into one great family. Jesus commands us to see the length of His cross, including people from Cuba, Ukraine, and others where we could help.

This is the length of the cross.

2) Now let us see the depth of the cross.

Can you imagine how much Jesus suffered when He said: *"I'm thirsty."* He is crucified, tormented by a high fever, and His whole body is wounded and inflamed. The muscles and body parts started to fall apart. Hands are disconnected from his shoulders, and his hips are disconnected from the body. He was hanging on the cross for six hours, on a burning sunny day and his body is drying out. His wounds are bleeding. Terrible suffering.

The horrors of all Good Friday culminated in this short sentence: *"I am thirsty."* This is how much He suffered to save you and me.

A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:29)

As the Israelites were wandering in the desert, they became very thirsty. God ordered Moses to strike a rock, from where a fresh creek came out, which saturated the thirsty souls.

Jesus Christ is the rock for us, from where living spiritual water is coming out to satisfy our thirsty souls. He is the only source of living water.

As He said: *"Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."* John 7:38

The source of life emerges for us from His body. He gives us relief, refreshment, and the water of eternal life. He is the source of forgiveness. He is the source of strength, drawing from it all who are tired of life. Here is the source of love. He is the source of spiritual renewal. We can be refreshed by Him. He is the source of healing. He is the source of salvation. We who seek encouragement can draw assurance from Him.

Once, He said: *“Let anyone who is thirsty come to Me and drink.”* (John 7:37) But on the cross, He was thirsty as He suffered to death.

This was the depth of His suffering.

3) And now let us see the height of the cross, from where He expressed this triumphant exclamation, *“It is Accomplished! It is Done! It is Finished!”* It sounds like a firm, self-conscious report as someone steps in front of his lord and reports that the mission he had is accomplished. Here, the divine messenger, Jesus, turns from the cross to His Father and reports back to God.

How different it is as Jesus is finishing His life, saying: I accomplished my mission. I talked to many people who, at the end of their lives, complained because they did not finish everything they planned. We, too, might feel that so many things were not completed, and we did not finish our work. Yes, the great work is done. Our salvation was done!

This is what Jesus had to do. This was His mission. Because He took our sin upon Himself, God forgave us. Because He died for us, we don't have to be punished for our sins. Because He died, God loved the sinner again, without condemning us for our sin. Jesus was condemned so we shall not be condemned. Jesus paid it all, because we could not pay for our sin. With His death Jesus gave us life. And it's all done now.

As He said: *“I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.”* (John 17:4)

Let us recall the verses from Ephesians 3:17: *“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”*

Do we feel now the length and the depth and the height of the cross of Golgotha? That cross of Calvary reaches all the way to heaven, to the throne of God. When

we look at the height of the cross, our gaze is lost to eternity. Let us glorify Him who, through His redeeming death, has united us to one another and to God forever, and has finished everything to save us. Amen