



Good Friday 10 April 2020

Introduction

Join us online if you can at 11:30am (note the later start time). Website: basingstokesalvationarmy.sermon.net. Smartphone/tablet sermon.net app (search for Basingstoke Salvation Army). Facebook - www.facebook.com/BasingstokeSalvationArmy/live. YouTube - www.youtube.com/robwestwoodpayne/live. Listen on any phone - dial 01256 679888 (from around three hours after the service).

Today we have an opportunity to reflect on the darkness surrounding Good Friday. Is the Light of the World really extinguished? Join in the songs, read the Bible readings and sit in silence in between.

Bible Message – Conquered by Darkness?

1 Corinthians 15:26 NLT

And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.

One of the main themes of Jesus' death on Good Friday is darkness. Darkness has always been strongly connected with death, and so it is only fitting this is a theme.

Matthew 27:45 NLT

At noon, darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock.

Why did this happen? Darkness is often a sign of God's judgment. His first blessing created light:

Genesis 1:3 NLT

Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

But now there is no light as judgment falls on the earth, foretold by the prophets:

Amos 8:9 NLT

"In that day," says the Sovereign LORD, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth while it is still day.

Part of the whole point of the cross is that there the weight of the world's evil really did converge upon Jesus, blotting out the sunlight of God's love as surely as the light of day was blotted out for three hours. (Tom Wright)

Good Friday is painted black. If light symbolises God then darkness suggests everything that is anti-God.

John 8:12 NLT

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

On Good Friday there seems to be no exception to where the darkness fell. Even Jesus appears to be in darkness.

Matthew 27:46 NLT

At about three o'clock, Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Religion has abandoned him. The world empire has abandoned him. His followers have all but abandoned him. And now, he truly believes his Father has abandoned him. Jesus feels he has, if we take his words at face value.

John 1:5 NLT



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The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

And yet, it appears as if Jesus' light has been put out. He has been abandoned by God. Can God the Son really be torn away from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit? How could that happen? Did God really abandon his Son on the cross? If so, what was the nature of that abandonment and what purpose did God have for it.

Matthew doesn't tell us. He doesn't explain. He leaves it as a mystery.

The Light of the World carries his bright Light down into the deepest, darkest dark of death. And as he does so he has lit up and exposed the powers of death. He has the victory! But in order to have that victory - for you and for me - he first allowed death and darkness to conquer him.

Matthew 5:14 The Message

"Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill.

How do we respond? He commissions us to be his light bringers in today's dark world. We give our own lives, we take up our own crosses, to show love, to bring peace, to confront evil with goodness.

Stay with the darkness today, but know that Jesus' light shines on, and we must shine that light to all around us.

Song – O sacred head once wounded

O sacred head once wounded,
With grief and pain weighed down,
How scornfully surrounded
With thorns, thine only crown!
How pale art thou with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish
Which once was bright as morn!

2 O Lord of life and glory,
What bliss till now was thine!
I read the wondrous story,
I joy to call thee mine.
Thy grief and thy compassion
Were all for sinners? gain;
Mine, mine was the transgression,
But thine the deadly pain.

3 What language shall I borrow
To thank thee, dearest friend,
For this thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end?
O make me thine for ever!
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never
Outlive my love to thee.

4 Be near me, Lord, when dying;
O show thyself to me;
And, for my succour flying,
Come, Lord, to set me free.
These eyes, new faith receiving,
From Jesus shall not move;
For he who dies believing
Dies safely through thy love.

Paulus Gerhardt (1607-1676) (from Bernard of Clairvaux 1090-1153), trs James Waddell Alexander (1804-1859)

Read – Luke 22:14-16; 19-20, then keep silence

Read - John 13:21-30, then keep silence

Song – We worship thee, O Crucified!

We worship thee, O Crucified!
What glories didst thou lay aside;
What depth of human grief and sin
Didst thou consent to languish in,
That through atoning blood outpoured
Our broken peace might be restored!

2 We mourn that e'er our hearts should be
One with a world that loves not thee;
That with the crowd we passed thee by
And saw, but did not feel, thee die.
Not till we knew our guilt and shame
Did we esteem the Saviour's name.



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3 Though with our shame we shunned the light,
Thou didst not leave us in the night;
We were not left in sin to stray
Unsought, unloved, from thee away;
For from thy cross irradiates
A power that saves and recreates.

Albert Orsborn (1886-1967)

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Read - Mark 14:27-31, then keep silence

Song – Once, on a day, was Christ led forth to die

Once, on a day, was Christ led forth to die,
And with the crowd that pressed on him joined I.
Slowly they led him, led him to the tree,
And I beheld his hands no more were free.
Bound fast with cords, and this was his distress,
That men denied those hands outstretched to
bless.

4 O loved above all earthly love,
To thee our hearts adoring move;
Thy boundless mercies yearn to save
And in thy blood sin's wounds to lave.
O speed the day when men shall see
That human hopes are all in thee.

*Sacred hands of Jesus, they were bound for me;
Wounded hands of Jesus, stretched upon a tree,
Ever interceding, mercy is their plea.
Their effectual pleading brings grace to me,
Redeeming grace to me.*

2 Hands that were scarred by daily fret and tear;
Hands quick to soothe the troubled brow of care;
Hands strong to smite the sins that men enthrone,
Yet never raised to seek or claim their own:
Dear hands of Christ! and yet men feared them so
That they must bind them as to death they go.

Albert Orsborn (1886-1967)

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Read - Mark 14:32-46, then keep silence

Song – King of my life, I crown thee now

King of my life, I crown thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

3 Hands that still break to men the living bread;
Hands full of power to raise again the dead,
Potent and healing, eager to reclaim,
Laid in forgiveness on one bowed in shame;
Say, would'st thou bind, by pride and unbelief,
Those hands that compass all thy soul's relief?

*Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget thine agony,
Lest I forget thy love to me,
Lead me to Calvary.*

2 Show me the tomb where thou wast laid,
Tenderly mourned and wept;
Angels in robes of light arrayed
Guarded thee whilst thou slept.

3 Lead me, like Mary, through the gloom,
Come with a gift to thee;
Show to me now the empty tomb,
Lead me to Calvary.

4 May I be willing, Lord, to bear
Daily my cross for thee,
Even the cup of grief to share;
Thou hast borne all for me.

Jennie Evelyn Hussey (1874-1958)

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Read - Luke 22:52-53; 66-23:5, then keep silence

Song – On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross

On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame,
And I love that old cross where the dearest and
best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

*So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross
And exchange it some day for a crown.*

2 O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left his glory above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

3 To the old rugged cross I will ever be true,
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then he'll call me some day to my Home far away
Where his glory for ever I'll share.

George Bennard (1873-1958)

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Read - Matthew 27:15-26, then keep silence

Song – Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day

1 Oh, to see the dawn of the darkest day;
Christ on the road to Calvary;
tried by sinful men, torn and beaten then,
nailed to a cross of wood.

*This the pow'r of the cross;
Christ became sin for us;
took the blame, bore the wrath.
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

2 Oh, to see the pain written on your face,
bearing the awesome weight of sin;
ev'ry bitter thought, ev'ry evil deed,
crowning your blood-stained brow.

3 Now the daylight flees, now the ground
beneath quakes as its maker bows his head,
curtain torn in two, dead are raised to life;
'Finished!' the vict'ry cry.

4 Oh, to see my name written in the wounds,
for through your suff'ring I am free;
death is crushed to death, life is mine to live;
won through your selfless love.

*This the pow'r of the cross;
Son of God, slain for us;
what a love! What a cost!
We stand forgiven at the cross.*

Keith Getty (born 1974) and Stuart Townend (born 1963)

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Read - Mark 15:21-39, then keep silence

Read - John 19:38-42, then keep silence

A Final Prayer

Seeker in the dark, do not be disheartened, for God hears your prayer. 'Come near to God, and he will come near to you.' (James 4:8)