
St. James'-Rosemount United Church

171 Sherwood Ave. Kitchener ON N2B 1K2

~ God's Compassionate Community Sharing Christian Faith ~



Friday, April 2, 2021 – Good Friday
Worship Leader: Rev. Chris Fickling

VU: Voices United

MV: More Voices

*We acknowledge that we are on the Haldimand Tract,
traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabeg, and
Haudenosaunee peoples.*

WE GATHER IN GOD'S HOPE

Prelude

Opening

One: This Lent, our Faith Study has looked at the last words of Jesus, with commentary from the American preacher, Adam Hamilton. Today's service is a combination of Scripture, Hamilton's reflections, poetry, prayer and song. As we prepare our hearts for this moment, we know that the pain of this day amplifies the pain and suffering we feel in this current moment. Know that you are not alone in this. Even in the helpless and hopeless moments, God is. For we pray:

Though hope desert my heart,
though strangeness fill my soul,
though truth torment my mind,
you have been here before.

Though confidence run dry,
though weary flesh be sore,
though conversation bear no fruit,
you have been here before.

There is no threatening place,
no trial I could know
which has not known your presence first:
you have been here before.

I will not dread the dark,
the fate beyond control,
nor fear what reigns in frightening things:
you will be there before. (John Bell)

Opening Hymn O Come and Mourn

VU136

***O come and mourn with me awhile;
O come ye to the Saviour's side;
O come, together let us mourn:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.***

***Seven times he spake, seven words of love;
and all three hours his silence cried***

*for mercy on the souls of men:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*

*O break, O break, hard heart of mine!
Thy weak self-love and guilty pride
His Pilate and His Judas were:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*

*A broken heart, a fount of tears,
Ask, and they will not be denied;
A broken heart love's cradle is:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*

*O love of God! O sin of man!
In this dread act your strength is tried,
and victory remains with love:
Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.*

Seven Last Words Forgiveness (Luke 23:1-5,13-25,32-34a)

The whole assembly got up and led Jesus to Pilate and ² began to accuse him. They said, "We have found this man misleading our people, opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming that he is the Christ, a king." ³ Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "That's what you say." ⁴ Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no legal basis for action against this man." ⁵ But they objected strenuously, saying, "He agitates the people with his teaching throughout Judea—starting from Galilee all the way here." ¹³ Then Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people. ¹⁴ He said to them, "You brought this man before me as one who was misleading the people. I have questioned him in your presence and found nothing in this man's conduct that provides a legal basis for the charges you have brought against him. ¹⁵ Neither did Herod, because Herod returned him to us. He's done nothing that deserves death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I'll have him whipped, then let him go."

¹⁸ But with one voice they shouted, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us." (¹⁹ Barabbas had been thrown into prison because of a riot that had occurred in the city, and for murder.) ²⁰ Pilate addressed them again because he wanted to release Jesus.

²¹ They kept shouting out, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” ²² For the third time, Pilate said to them, “Why? What wrong has he done? I’ve found no legal basis for the death penalty in his case. Therefore, I will have him whipped, then let him go.” ²³ But they were adamant, shouting their demand that Jesus be crucified. Their voices won out. ²⁴ Pilate issued his decision to grant their request. ²⁵ He released the one they asked for, who had been thrown into prison because of a riot and murder. But he handed Jesus over to their will. ³² They also led two other criminals to be executed with Jesus. ³³ When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. ³⁴ Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they’re doing.”

Reading, Silence and Extinguish the Candle of Love

Who is the them, when Jesus says, Father forgive them? Of course the them was the Roman soldiers...of course it was the merchants and the money changers...and the priests and the Pharisees, Father, forgive them...for Pontius Pilate back in his palace...but was there anyone else he was praying for when he said ‘Father, forgive them’?

Jesus was praying for us...you and I, for we ...are them. Jesus didn’t wait until the resurrection to pray and bless others... Jesus speaks these words aloud so those throughout space and time would hear love’s crucified cries for all.

Poetry

C.S. Lewis

Love’s as warm as tears,
Love is tears: Pressure within the brain,
Tension at the throat,
Deluge, weeks of rain,
Haystacks afloat,
Featureless seas between
Hedges, where once was green.

Love’s as fierce as fire,
Love is fire: All sorts–Infernal heat
Clinkered with greed and pride,
Lyric desire, sharp-sweet,

Laughing, even when denied,
And that empyreal flame
Whence all loves came.

Love's as fresh as spring,
Love is spring: Bird-song in the air,
Cool smells in a wood,
Whispering "Dare! Dare!"
To sap, to blood,
Telling "Ease, safety, rest,
Are good; not best."

Love's as hard as nails,
Love is nails: Blunt, thick, hammered through
The medial nerves of One
Who, having made us, knew
The thing He had done,
Seeing (what all that is)
Our cross, and His.

*When we sing, **were you there**, you can with faith say, yes,
I was there, **when they crucified my Lord**.*

Hymn **Were You There** v1 and 5 VU 144

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble...
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

***Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?
Oh! Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble...
Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?***

Seven Last Words Salvation (Luke 23:35-43)

³⁵ The people were standing around watching, but the leaders sneered at him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself if he really is the Christ sent from God, the chosen one." ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him. They came up to him, offering him sour wine ³⁷ and saying, "If you really are the king of the Jews, save yourself." ³⁸ Above his head was a notice of the formal charge against him. It read "This

is the king of the Jews.”³⁹ One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus insulted him: “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”⁴⁰ Responding, the other criminal spoke harshly to him, “Don’t you fear God, seeing that you’ve also been sentenced to die?”⁴¹ We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong.”⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”⁴³ Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.”

Hymn

Jesus, Remember Me
Jesus, remember me

VU148

when you come into your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom.

Seven Last Words Relationship (John 19:25b-27)

²⁵ Jesus’ mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Reading, Silence and Extinguish the Candle of Joy

These are the most tender and powerful words of Jesus speaking from the cross...and they speak of God’s heart, and God’s will for our lives... There is no other human being who played a greater role in our salvation, aside from Jesus, than Mary his mother. Mary experienced the greatest pain watching Jesus, suffer and die... Mary’s faith would not allow her to abandon her Saviour. Mary’s love would surround him, even in dying and death. We cannot nor should not abandon our faith and love. For this story is not just about how Mary taking care of John and John taking care of Mary, but how in the Body of Christ, in the church, this is how we are commanded to care for one another.

Poetry

Malcom Guite

This darker path into the heart of pain
Was also hers whose love enfolded him
In flesh and wove him in her womb. Again
The sword is piercing. She, who cradled him
And gentled and protected her young son
Must stand and watch the cruelty that mars
Her maiden making. Waves of pain that stun
And sicken pass across his face and hers
As their eyes meet. Now she enfolds the world
He loves in prayer; the mothers of the disappeared
Who know her pain, all bodies bowed and curled
In desperation on this road of tears,
All the grief-stricken in their last despair,
Are folded in the mantle of her prayer.

Knowing joy allows us experience fully, the depth of this loss.

Music

Pieta

Joseph Martin

***In the shadow of a manger, by a candles dancing flame,
tender Mary holds her baby,
and she breathes His holy name
Jesus rest your weary head, close your weeping eyes.
As evening falls, she starts to sing a lullaby.
Lulay, lulay, peace be yours tonight.***

***In the shadow of the temple,
in a place so far from home,
Mary sees her child of wonder,
and she marvels how He's grown.
Jesus rest your weary head, and think on gentle things.
With loving arms she holds her Savior and she sings,
Lulay, lulay, peace be yours tonight.***

***In the shadow of Golgotha, underneath a darkened sky,
Mary gently cradles Jesus.
Through her tears she says goodbye.
Jesus rest your weary head. Your work on earth is done.
And as the darkness falls, she whispers to her son,
Lulay, lulay, peace be yours tonight.***

Seven Last Words Abandonment (Matthew 27:45-49)

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon the whole earth was dark. ⁴⁶ At about three Jesus cried out with a loud shout, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani,*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you left me?” ⁴⁷ After hearing him, some standing there said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

Music My God, My God, Why (Psalm 22) The Psalm Project

Seven Last Words Distress (John 19:28-29)

²⁸ After this, knowing that everything was already completed, in order to fulfill the scripture, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” ²⁹ A jar full of sour wine was nearby, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips.

Reading, Silence and Extinguish the Candle of Peace
Jesus is showing us what sacrificial love looks like...and this is the essence of following him. He’s teaching us about love...love that’s willing to sacrifice for someone else is what changes the world. What have you sacrificed in order to show God’s love to someone else?

In this scripture, the imagery shows how far God’s love will go – the sour wine *was to help Jesus die in his sleep, to make his death more peaceful. He refuses (at first) for Jesus is showing us what it costs God to show us mercy,* for there is no suffering or pain that is separate from or foreign to God. *The hyssop branch reminds us of the escape and Exodus from Egypt when the Israelites marked their doorposts with the blood of the lamb, protecting them during the Passover.* God’s love is sacrificial and liberating.

Poetry

At the Cross

Andy Stinson

I wait,
And time ticks past.

I gaze,
Made silent by the sight.

I watch,
As soldiers meticulously move
Executing each terrible, torturous task.

I gasp,
Still life lingers in His fragile, broken form.

I flinch,
As blow by blow,
Nails bite deep through flesh to find wood.

I stand
As He is lifted high,
Silhouetted 'gainst the sky which He has made.

I weep
As His cry echoes deep in my hardened, calloused heart.

I wail,
As He screams 'it is complete,
Finished, final, said and done.'

I fall,
As the sky turns inky black
And the sun and moon and stars forget to shine.

I kneel,
As worlds collide,
And time ticks by;
What once bound, no longer seems to hold.

I bow,
For part of me is gone,
Kept forever on Calvary's painful peak.

I wait,
At the foot of the cross, to begin my journey home.

Peace does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble, or hard work. It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.

Hymn What Wondrous Love is This VU 147
What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To send such perfect peace, to my soul, to my soul
To send such perfect peace to my soul.

***Ye winged angels fly, bear the news, bear the news,
Ye winged angels fly, bear the news
Ye winged angels fly, like comets through the sky
With loud and joyful cry, bear the news, bear the news
With loud and joyful cry, bear the news.***

***To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing
To God and to the Lamb I will sing
To God and to the Lamb, Jehovah, great I am
And to the Son of man, I will sing, I will sing
And to the Son of man I will sing.***

***When we're from sorrow free, we'll sing on, we'll sing on
When we're from sorrow free, we'll sing on
When we're from sorrow free, we'll rise and joyful be
And through eternity, we'll sing on, we'll sing on
And through eternity, we'll sing on.***

***What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
what wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To send such perfect peace, to my soul, to my soul
To send such perfect peace to my soul.***

Seven Last Words Triumph (John 19:30)

³⁰ When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, "It is completed."

Reading, Silence and Extinguish the Candle of Hope
In the Aramaic, Jesus speaks just one word, Finished... completed...done. I often thought that this was like a defeated cry, It...is...finished...but what if this is a cry of victory? That Jesus had completed what he came for? But what had Jesus completed? There was (and arguably still is) something wrong with our world – something that only sacrificial love can fix, the laying down one's life for one's friends. For we look at friends and family, those around us that we would lay down our lives for. This is the love we are called to embody, no matter the cost.

As we prepare to hear Jesus's last words, we hear him pray the words of Psalm 31, a prayer *that his mother would have*

taught him when he was a little boy – a prayer that would be common to many Jewish children, God, into your hands I entrust my life. This was Jesus’ eternal hope that is ultimately ours – God is entrusted with our lives, and our deaths. For this is the same prayer we say on the good and bad days, the green pasture moments, and the valleys of the shadow of death...“Father, into your hands I entrust my life.”

Poetry

Jan Richardson

That he can still speak.

That in the depths of his pain and his dying, he does not
cease to say what he needs to say.

That as he lets go, he leaves them with words of comfort and
release, of lamentation and love.

*Forgive. You will be with me. Behold. Forsaken. Thirst.
Finished. Into your hands.*

Knowing that these are his last words, but not his final ones.
That after this, there will be a span of silence. And that soon
the silence will come to an end.

For now, we watch, we weep, we bear witness, we wait.

*Christmas and Easter can be subjects for poetry, but Good
Friday, like Auschwitz, cannot. The reality is so horrible, it is
not surprising that people should have found it a stumbling
block to faith. W.H. Auden*

Choir Anthem The Love that Clothes itself in Light

Seven Last Words Reunion (Luke 23:44-46)

⁴⁴ It was now about noon, and darkness covered the whole
earth until about three o’clock, ⁴⁵ while the sun stopped
shining. Then the curtain in the sanctuary tore down the
middle. ⁴⁶ Crying out in a loud voice, Jesus said, “Father, *into
your hands I entrust my life.*” After he said this, he breathed
for the last time.

Silence and Extinguish the Christ Candle

We Depart this Time of Worship
in Silence

