

“he said “It is finished”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Today’s readings for your perusal are Isaiah 52: 13- 15 & 53: 1-12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10: 16-25, John chap 18 & 19.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY – HOLY WEEK - FRIDAY

¹³See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

¹⁴Just as there were many who were appalled at him—his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness—¹⁵so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. God’s servant would come to bring us wisdom, as we read here in Isaiah Jesus would be wise, bringing God’s teachings to humankind, only for those in power around Him not liking what He taught, and it is still the same today. We then see in the reading, bearing in mind Isaiah carried out his ministry 740BC, he prophesied about Jesus, the Messiah, God’s Anointed One, or in the Greek Christos or the Christ, he tells us here that Jesus would be crucified and many would not recognise Him because of the barbaric beating He received at the hands of the romans. But we are told that because of His suffering for us on the Cross of Calvary many will be taught and recognise the truth and have their eyes open and minds cleared of all the falsehood that is out there in the world.

So Isaiah asks the question: **53** *Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?* The Crucifixion of Christ lets us know clearly that unlike the world, Jesus grew up in a normal home with two married parents who loved Him. We hear from Isaiah that ²*He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.* Christ did not go out there to wow people with his charm and good looks as many try to do today, they are desperate for attention and fame and will sadly do anything to get it and stay in the camera’s eye, but Jesus was not like that He went about His life peacefully, teaching others about God and how to live a good life without sin. He taught and still teaches us how to live today, if only people would listen, that is why Isaiah’s question is pertinent for Good Friday, is anyone listening?

Yet Isaiah tells us that the Messiah would be rejected by the people of God, the Israelites, their leaders were not happy that He was teaching them to obey God and not man made rules and regulations that the scribes and pharisees were teaching the people. So we are told: ³*He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their*

faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Jesus did not seem to let the fact that He was despised and rejected bother Him, He could see the bigger picture. He did not complain about it. You notice though that the immediate reaction to anyone who does not believe or want to hear the message of Christ is that they immediately react with emotional anger, they become very angry and defensive very quickly, this is because they fear the truth, that Christ is who He said He is, the Son of God, the Messiah, but He faced the rejection of the so called intellectuals of the day. We can assume that Jesus felt pain just as we do when we are rejected, but He did not allow it to prevent Him from doing God's work and fulfilling His purpose and we should not let it hinder us doing God's work either. Today although appears a sad day, it is a good day for Christians for it reminds us that Jesus died to save us and that is something to celebrate. ⁴*Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.* ⁵*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

Jesus had the weight of the worlds sin on His shoulders, it crushed down on Him on the cross, He was pierced for our wrong doings and wrong attitudes and His appearance on the cross shocked all those who saw Him, for the romans were extra violent towards Him to make an example of Him, but they did not break Him, but why did He do it? He did it because ⁶*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* ⁷*He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.* ⁸*By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.* Jesus was not given a fair trial and those leaders of the Jewish Sanhedrin who thought themselves wise and knowledgeable did not understand the sacrificial nature of His death, nobody did until He rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. Because of their lack of knowledge they decided because of the nature and type of death He suffered He was to be buried with criminals, He was not to be buried with honour as a teacher would have been and Isaiah associates the wicked with the rich here, because the rich would be given false glory and honourable burials, again pointing out that riches and fame gets you nowhere except death because they obtained their wealth by wicked means and not following God, this is what Christ taught against, whereas following Christ brings you life everlasting. ⁹*He was*

assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Joseph of Arimathea gave Jesus an honourable burial by placing His body in his that is Joseph's own tomb, which he had prepared for his own burial, but instead he out of an act of love for Christ put Jesus' body in his tomb instead. Joseph realised as many people since, that we have been forgiven much by Christ on the Cross. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. Note what is said here, Jesus became an offering for our sin, something had to be done to free us from sin and death's hold on life, so by Jesus standing in our place, He accepted the punishment for us so that we can live. His that is Christ's descendants will live for ever, those are the people who are called Christian, followers of Christ, we are His children and so because of His death we get to live. But Isaiah's prophesy has not ended, he tells us ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice we are taught in the Bible ¹⁶ "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." ¹⁷ Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." ¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. ¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Believing we are made right with God through our faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, is a fresh, new and living way, it is one that bring us freedom from the worries of life, it gives us freedom, boldness and confidence, knowing that we are loved. Jesus offers us His grace, which produces life, through His shed blood he made a new and living way for you to draw near to God with confidence. Let the Crucified

Christ call you and bring you His peace because “His love is so amazing, so divine, that it demands my soul, my life, my all.”

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, today is a day we cannot comprehend, we cannot understand why you would send your Son to die for us? We find it hard to understand why the people rejected Him and your message, but now today for those who believe we know that it was because you love us all that you did not want us to suffer, so you gave us a chance to come back to you through Jesus who died so that we may live with you in heaven for eternity. He died so that we might find peace in our troubled lives, for the ways of the world are cruel, but when we have your Son in our hearts we are at peace.

Today when Christ died on the cross of wood on the hill of Golgotha, the Cross of Calvary has become a symbol of hope for many people in the world today, for when we think we have it hard in life, we are reminded of what Jesus suffered on our behalf and then we see how He overcame death to bring us life, then we realise that we can get over any hardship that is put in our way, for His love is eternal. You blessed us all that day when Christ was crucified, we saw clearly the division in the world, those who are against Christ are with the Devil and those who are for Christ were the ones who were crying that day, but three days later our tears, there tears were turned to joy and for that we thank you Father.

Today is or may be a sad day for many in our communities because they may have lost a loved one to Covid 19 or to other disease, but because of Christ crucified, Christ buried and Christ Risen, they and we can celebrate because we know if we have faith that we will see them again with you in heaven. Such is the wonder of today that all who believe know that they will not die but live at peace with you, even though our hearts may be heavy, they will be comforted. Therefore, in Jesus name we ask that you heal those who are ill today and comfort those who are grieving. Bless our families and friends and all those who care for, look after us and provide for us, keep them safe and bring them home safely to their families.

Help us today Father to pray for the people around us, to serve with hearts full of love and peace, to serve with forgiving hearts, because if our Lord can forgive those who crucified Him we can forgive those who have said wrong or bad things about us, or who have hurt us in some way. Help us also to pray for healing in our land and in our world and give wisdom to leaders of our governments we pray. Amen