

# Good Friday

Three Hours at the Cross VI

14:30

A notable feature of the last year of lockdown and living restricted lives has been the strangeness of time: we lost our temporal landmarks. If you have not said it yourself, you will I am sure have heard someone else say "I can't tell which day of the week it is!"

Mark's Gospel is alone in telling us what happened every day of Holy Week. No other Gospel does this, but Mark's narrative is carefully constructed around the days of that week. We will use the time of each of the half hours of the service to consider each of those days Jesus, his followers and others experienced, comparing the days of the week we traditionally have experienced, the more recent, more anonymous days of the virus, and, as we approach more relaxed times ahead, the days of the weeks we are expecting. We will reflect on this in parallel to the six hours of the crucifixion, the timings of which Mark is also careful to record.

Mark tells us nothing about the Saturday and some believers will not speak at all between the end of this service and the opening of worship on Sunday. Please use the time, especially the silences to reflect on moments when you recognised any of your own reality and self in the readings, poems, music or addresses, to speak quietly to the Christ of the Cross and to listen for his message to you today.

## Just Got Paid

*"Just step in my shoes and take my pay. . . "*

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love toward humankind hast sent thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all humanity should follow the example of his great humility; mercifully grant that we may follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Psalm

88 *Domine Deus*

O Lord God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before thee : O let my prayer enter into thy presence, incline thine ear unto my calling.  
For my soul is full of trouble : and my life draweth nigh unto hell.  
I am counted as one of them that go down into the pit : and I have been even as a man that hath no strength.  
Free among the dead, like unto them that are wounded, and lie in the grave : who are out of remembrance, and are cut away from thy hand.  
Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit : in a place of darkness, and in the deep.  
Thine indignation lieth hard upon me : and thou hast vexed me with all thy storms.  
Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me : and made me to be abhorred of them.  
I am so fast in prison : that I cannot get forth.  
My sight faileth for very trouble : Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.  
Dost thou shew wonders among the dead : or shall the dead rise up again, and praise thee?  
Shall thy loving-kindness be shewed in the grave : or thy faithfulness in destruction?  
Shall thy wondrous works be known in the dark : and thy righteousness in the land where all things are forgotten?  
Unto thee have I cried, O Lord : and early shall my prayer come before thee.  
Lord, why abhorrest thou my soul : and hidest thou thy face from me?  
I am in misery, and like unto him that is at the point to die : even from my youth up thy terrors have I suffered with a troubled mind.  
Thy wrathful displeasure goeth over me : and the fear of thee hath undone me.  
They came around me daily like water : and compassed me together on every side.  
My lovers and friends hast thou put away from me : and hid mine acquaintance out of my sight.

Reading: Mark 15. 1 - 15.

**Friday's Child,**

*W H Auden  
(In memory of Dietrich Bonhoeffer,  
martyred at Flossenburg, April 9th, 1945)*

He told us we were free to choose  
But, children as we were, we thought—  
“Paternal Love will only use  
Force in the last resort  
On those too bumptious to repent”—  
Accustomed to religious dread,  
It never crossed our minds he meant  
Exactly what He said.

Perhaps He frowns, perhaps He grieves,  
But it seems idle to discuss  
If anger or compassion leaves  
The bigger bangs to us.  
What reverence is rightly paid  
To a Divinity so odd  
He lets the Adam whom He made  
Perform the Acts of God?

It might be jolly if we felt  
Awe at this Universal Man  
(When kings were local, people knelt);  
Some try to, but who can?  
The self-observed observing Mind  
We meet when we observe at all  
Is not alarming or unkind  
But utterly banal.

Thought instruments at Its command  
Make wish and counterwish come true,  
It clearly cannot understand  
What It can clearly do.  
Since the analogies are rot  
Our senses based belief upon,  
We have no means of learning what  
Is really going on,  
And must put up with having learned  
All proofs or disproofs that we tender  
Of His existence are returned  
Unopened to the sender.

Now, did He really break the seal  
and rise again? We dare not say;  
But conscious unbelievers feel  
Quite sure of Judgment Day.  
Meanwhile, a silence on the cross,  
As dead as we shall ever be,  
Speaks of some total gain or loss,  
And you and I are free  
To guess from the insulted face  
Just what Appearances He saves  
By suffering in a public place  
A death reserved for slaves.

Address

Music

Silence

[at 15:00] The Lord's Prayer.