

Good Friday—March 29, 2024
Text: John 19:17-30
Theme: Good Friday Windows



We continue our look at the front windows tonight. We have three windows that show us the crucifixion which is proper because that is where all the work of our salvation took place. Some people do not like Good Friday because it is such a mournful day. They prefer to skip to the Resurrection and celebrate. I'm sure Jesus would have preferred that as well but I am thankful that He did not skip the hard work. Without Good Friday, there can be no Easter. Good Friday is good because Jesus did everything for us so that we could inherit paradise. That is both good for us and good for God. We get to spend eternity in paradise and He gets to have the ones He loves with Him forever.

The first Good Friday window shows Jesus being tried before Pilate. We see Him standing there in the purple robe and crown of

thorns with which the soldiers mockingly dressed Him. They thought they were being funny, mocking the whacko that said He was the son of God. They were more correct than they could ever know. Indeed, He was the King, far more a king than Pilate himself. Pilate was a middle management, pencil pushing, governor of a Roman territory. Jesus is the King of the Universe. He stood before Pilate in humility, accepting His punishment which He knew was for us.

The second Good Friday Window shows Jesus carrying the cross on the way to Golgotha. As you recall, He struggled having been beaten nearly to death, so the Roman soldiers pressed a bystander into service to help Him carry the cross. That's who you see in the window, Simon of Cyrene. We don't know much about Simon other than he was pressed into service by the Romans to carry the cross. It's perfect really. We look at that window and we see ourselves in Simon's place. The task master of the sinful world swinging a whip and the humble Christ bearing the sins of the world. At our baptism, you and I were pressed into service. No one asked us. Our parents decided for us that we would be a cross bearer for Jesus. We don't really know what happened to Simon after the crucifixion but I like to imagine him becoming a Christian and proclaiming Jesus. As one who physically bore His cross he continued to spiritually bear His cross even as we do to this day. It is

not easy being Christian. The world is much kinder to those who lay Jesus' cross aside and decide that they prefer to trade eternal life for the pleasures and sensualities of this world.

The third Good Friday window is the crucifixion itself. We see Mary kneeling at the foot of the cross and John, Jesus' good friend and protector of His mother, standing and looking upon Christ. We see the initials INRI carved over Jesus' head. It stands for Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum, Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. It was the sign Pilate had made for Him. The Pharisees wanted him to change it to Jesus of Nazareth SAID He was King of the Jews. But Pilate stood firm and said "I have written what I have written. Pilate boldly witnessed to who Christ was even if it was accidental.

This is the moment of His death. He has just commended His soul to the Father. You can see darkness descending upon the earth and the lightening tearing apart the sky in the background. It was at this moment that the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom by itself. Christ was dead and damned. Sin was paid for and there would never be a separation between God and His people again.

But how do we know this is true? We are betting our lives on it being true. We know it all happened just as the windows proclaim.

We read about it in the Scriptures and hear four eyewitness accounts of the facts, but still, how do we know that Jesus was not just a zealous rabbi who truly believed He was the Son of God and was crucified for His beliefs. How do we know that we are saved because He died? I will tell you how we know, but not until Sunday. No man has ever provided more proof of what he has done than Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews.