

Series: Good Friday Message 2016

CDOBC – 3/25/16

Title: “The Painful Love of Jesus”

Passages: The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ last week

OBJECTIVE: *To help us see the how Jesus was treated – what He endured and suffered – yet He still chose to die for us.*

Opening prayer

What happened on the best day of your life?

- Was it a birthday party – a surprise party?
- Your wedding day?
- The birth of a child?
- The day you went to the doctor and heard the words, “*It’s in remission.*”
- Graduation day?
- First day on the job?
- Retirement day?
- The day when the in-laws left after staying in your home for 2 weeks?

It’s tough to choose the best day – because there are many to choose from and the different stages of life and different circumstances of life influence how good or bad a day is.

What was Jesus’ best day?

Tough question to answer.

- How about the end of day #6 as creation was completed – it was “very good” – and He ‘rested’ – He stopped creating because it was finished.
- Feeding 5,000 people from 1 small lunch...now that was a good day!
- The times He helped the disciples catch so much fish they could barely pull the nets into the boat! What fish stories they must have told over the years.
- Raising Lazarus from the dead!
- How about the day His disciples came back after going out in pairs and they preached and drove out demons and healed the sick – that would have been a great day.

I’m not sure if we can categorize the good days in Jesus’ life and rank them saying ‘*this day was the best day*’ or ‘*this day was the 2nd best*’, etc.

But I think one of the best days had to be when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey – and the people celebrated and praised His name – they acknowledged Him as the Messiah – the Son of David.

What a great day that must have been – when God was praised.

But even the joy of that great day was interrupted with sorrow. As Jesus rode from the Mount of Olives, down through the Kidron Valley and up to the Temple, He began

to weep as He looked at the city of Jerusalem and the impending judgment the city would soon be under (Luke 19:41-44).

But what was Jesus' worst day?

I think the last 5 days of Jesus' life added up to the worst days of His life.

His triumphal entry on Sunday was a day which held great joy and celebration (Matt. 21; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:37-38; John 12:12-13). But the joy of that day and the darkness He was about to embrace began to weigh on His heart – as evidenced by His weeping as He approached Jerusalem.

The people honored and praised Him as the Messiah. Words of highest praise were offered to Jesus.

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord”

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:38)

“Hosanna! “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” (Mark 11:9-10)

“Blessed is the King of Israel!” (John 12:13b)

Fitting praise for Jesus – but Jesus knew the heart of men (John 2:24) and He knew their praise would be short-lived.

This evening – on this Good Friday - I want us to consider not only the cross of Christ, but the days leading to the cross. I want us to see and feel the sadness, heartache and pain He experienced as He set His course for the cross.

The pain of the cross did not begin with the soldiers whips and the crown of thorns. His pain began – as we have already seen – in the middle of praise – as He wept over the city of Jerusalem and the judgment they would soon experience as the Roman general Titus would destroy the city and tear down every wall along with the impressive and beautiful stones of the Temple.

In the Gospels, after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Sunday, the writers tell us *Jesus cleansed the Temple* (Matt. 21:15). After cleansing the Temple from the money-changers, He heals the blind and lame, and after being heralded as “the Son of David” it was too much for the religious leaders, Matthew tells us they were “indignant”.

How it must have disappointed Him – how it must have hurt Him when those entrusted with the religious health and leadership of the Jewish people were only growing more ravenous in their hatred.

Next, we see a wonderful dinner party held in Jesus’ honor in the town of Bethany (Matt. 26:8; Mark 14:3-5). During the dinner Jesus was honored by a woman as she anointed Him with a very expensive perfume. She poured it on His head as He was reclining at the table. Both Matthew and Mark tell us His disciples became “indignant” (Matt. 21:15 & 26:8; Mark 14:4). This is the same Greek word which described the hatred of the

religious leaders after Jesus overturned all the money-changing tables in the Temple.

Once again – the tremendous disappointment and pain He must have felt at their lack of understanding and their anger toward this woman who was giving Him great honor.

I believe so much of Jesus' pain and sorrow in the days leading to His crucifixion had to do with the lack of faith – the boiling hatred – the refusal of so many to believe in Him and to apply His teaching and follow His example as He gave people grace, love and truth.

As Jesus was teaching in the Temple, it says in **John 12:37**, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in Him.”

How frustrating this must have been for Him. The people's lack of faith even though they had witnessed so many undeniable miracles and heard Jesus teach many times. However, a few verses later, John tells us some of the religious leaders did believe (**12:42-43**) but they were afraid to publicly declare their faith.

Wonderful...some of the leaders believe...but they're so afraid to let others know of their belief!

How do you think this made Jesus feel?

Do you ever keep your belief silent?

Are you ever afraid or hesitant to let your faith be known or seen by others?

From His triumphal entry on Sunday through Wednesday, Jesus spends a great deal of time every day teaching in the Temple courts. He is teaching the crowds which gathered to hear Him – and, at the same time, He is dealing with the incessant and frustrating questions which the religious leaders pose to Him. They ask Him questions not to hear His answer and learn, but their motive is to trick Him and catch Him saying something they can use against Him.

Sounds like the modern political process.

What a mixture of joy and sorrow Jesus experienced as He taught. Joy as the people were eager to hear His teaching. No doubt some were saved as they put their faith in Jesus. Great sorrow as many refused to believe and the powerful religious leaders kept up their cowardly attacks and opposition.

The Gospel writers then move us to the night of the Last Supper – Thursday night - the night Jesus spends celebrating Passover with His disciples.

As John recounts that night, there is a point where Thomas and Philip are asking Jesus questions – questions which make it clear to Jesus they still don't know who He is.

Even after Peter's great confession and declaration that Jesus is the Christ (**Matt. 16:13**) and after all the miracles they had been

eyewitnesses to...they still don't understand, and I think this is frustrating to Jesus. He says to them:

“Don't you know Me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me?” (John 14:7-9)

You can almost hear the frustration in His voice!

Luke tells us “a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.” (Luke 22:24)

And you thought your family gathering at Thanksgiving was uncomfortable and off-point!

I can only hope this “dispute arose” before Jesus washed their feet – and not afterwards.

If you were Jesus how would you have felt. You only have a few hours before you are arrested – and about 12 hours before you're nailed to a cross – and your disciples still don't get it!

Don't deify Jesus to the point you strip Him of His humanity. Don't think the deity of Jesus is beyond sadness and sorrow.

Another tremendous disappointment came in the Garden of Gethsemane where the decision point of salvation history and the providential plan of God would be tested.

In the deepest distress of His life He reaches out to His 3 closest friends – Peter, James and John – He wants them to pray with Him. As Jesus is facing the most fearful thing He can imagine – to take on the sins of all humanity...separation

from the Father...the wrath of the Father toward sin – His closest friends can't stay awake. His closest friends cannot support him during His time of greatest need. (Matt. 26:37-38; Mark 14:33-41; Luke 22:45-46)

Then Judas approaches with armed Roman soldiers and a gang of misfits and thugs. (Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:45; Luke 22:47-48; John 13:2, 21; 18:2)

Have you ever been betrayed by a close friend?

Whatever pain you felt...magnify it by a huge number.

It's one thing for a sinner to be betrayed by another sinner.

It's another thing for God incarnate to be betrayed by someone He loved and led for 3 years.

John tells us that during dinner (the Last Supper), Jesus was “troubled in spirit” (John 13:21). In context it's clear He was “troubled in spirit” because of Judas Iscariot and what Judas was about to do. All night long...as Jesus enjoyed the Passover meal with His closest friends...as He taught them about loving one another and serving one another...as He washed their feet giving them a living example of humility and serving – Judas' betrayal was weighing on His heart. The worst part of the betrayal was not only due to the fact this was one of His closest friends, but He was betrayed by a kiss. A sign of love and affection – perverted into a sign of betrayal and selfishness.

Upon His arrest, another piece of His heart was pierced as He was abandoned by those closest to Him. (Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:50)

Jesus told them this would happen – and they all denied even the possibility. “*We’ll die for you Jesus – we’ll stand by you no matter what!*” Every disciple vowed they would not disown Jesus or ‘fall away’ on account of Jesus.

Empty words of loyalty hurt.

All His disciples fled upon His arrest – (Matthew 26:56)

The cross is now likely 8-10 hours away, and during these hours the bible paints a very clear picture of the physical brutality and pain Jesus endured.

Even before the nails secured Him to the wood of the cross, He suffered unbelievable levels of physical pain.

But during those hours He also suffered pain deep in His heart – not from any fist, club or whip – but from the unbelief and hatred of humanity toward Him.

As the account in the Gospels continue, Jesus is brought into an illegal trial – and false witnesses are brought before the Sanhedrin and they give false testimony about Him.

Have you ever thought how much sorrow and how much pain Jesus felt as He was falsely accused by those He loved (human race)! (Matt. 26:57-67; Mark 14:56-59; Luke 22:63-65, 23:1-2)

We read how they spit in His face and punch Him / slapped Him / mocked Him. There was certainly physical pain involved...but He loved them – and they lied about Him and treated Him with such hatred.

As the illegal trial was going on, His #1 disciple – the leader of the others – the ‘rock’ – Peter – denies Him 3x. (Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:68-72; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:17, 25, 26-27)

Luke writes of Peter’s 3rd denial. Someone in the crowd saw Peter and said to the others, “Certainly this fellow was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” Peter replied, ‘Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!’ Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.” (22:60-62)

Who do you think was more saddened and hurt by Peter’s denials – Jesus or Peter? No doubt Peter was overwhelmed with grief, regret and sorrow. He was guilty and felt terrible and deeply ashamed for what he had done.

But Jesus was left out to dry in emphatic fashion – and He couldn’t go somewhere and weep – He was in chains being unfairly tried, falsely accused, spit on and punched.

As the events of this night continue, it doesn’t get any better – the stakes only get higher and the pain increases as well. Next we read of Judas Iscariot hanging himself. (Matt. 27:5)

A number of years ago on a Sunday morning – about 30 minutes before the first service was going to start – I received a phone call from one of my college friends – telling me that one of our close friends in our group had just committed suicide – he hung himself in his garage. Talk about getting sucker-punched in the gut. I couldn't believe it – it was a shock to all of us – most of all to his wife and 3 young children.

Have you ever thought what Jesus felt when He knew Judas was dead – that he hung himself?

We often think, “*Serves him right – he betrayed Jesus – he deserved a death 1,000 times worse!*”

Maybe so...hard to argue with that sentiment...but we often forget or discount the love of Jesus – even for His betrayer.

After the illegal trial held by the Jewish religious leaders, they declare Jesus guilty of blasphemy and worthy of death. However, Israel is under Roman occupation – and the Jews cannot carry out capital punishment, so they bring Jesus to Pilate – the Roman governor who is there in Jerusalem.

Pilate tries unsuccessfully to release Jesus. He believes Jesus is innocent, but the political pressure and mob mentality which is taking shape causes him to sacrifice Jesus for political favoritism and peace in the city.

A ‘kick-in-the-teeth’ to Jesus is when the people are given a choice – do they want Jesus released or would they rather

have a notorious and guilty criminal by the name of Barabbas? They choose Barabbas. (Matt. 27:20-21; Mark 9-15; Luke 23:18-19; John 18:40)

Not only do they want Barabbas released instead of Jesus – they begin to shout for Jesus to be crucified. (Matt. 27:22-23; Mark 15:13-14; Luke 23:20; John 19:6; 15)

Those who days before cried out in praise:

“Hosanna! “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!” (Mark 11:9-10) now words of hate come out of their mouth.

Once again, the love of Jesus for the people is rewarded with their rabid cries for His death.

Pilate hands Jesus over to the executioner squad of Roman soldiers who had perfected the torture and death of crucifixion. Part of the process involved scourging where the person to be crucified would be whipped and the whips were designed to tear away the flesh from their backs leaving the muscles, nerves and bones exposed.

It must have been a slow day in the barracks. Normally an execution squad would consist of 4-8 soldiers.

On this day, Matthew, Mark and John tell us the entire company of soldiers come out to enjoy the bloody show. (Matt. 27:27; Mark 15:16; John 19:1-3)

An entire company of soldiers was one-tenth of a legion – approx. 300-600 men (Ryrie Study Bible - notes).

Jesus became the joke and the center of attention in the worst imaginable way. 300 – 600 soldiers cheered on their fellow-soldiers as they whipped him and tore His flesh off of His back. As Jesus cried out in pain, hundreds of soldiers were laughing, hollering, cheering on their comrades.

At last we find ourselves at the foot of the cross.

As He hung on the cross, Jesus is mocked and ridiculed by those watching and passing by. (Matt. 27:39-44; Mark 15:29-32; Luke 23:35-39)

Proverbs tells us the company we keep reflects on our character and in the N.T. we read how “Bad company corrupts good morals.” (Prov. 13:20; 1 Cor. 15:33).

Jesus – God incarnate – the sinless Lamb of God – was crucified between two guilty criminals. The innocent was counted among the guilty. (Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:32-33)

The scourging and crucifixion Jesus endured was physical pain beyond our ability to comprehend. The mocking and humiliation he endured was unfit for the worst criminal. But Jesus bore all of this for us.

He was willing to go through this – **He chose these things** in order to die for our sins

Jesus’ response to all of this:

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:34

How have you hurt Jesus?

What pain have you caused Him?

It's pretty easy to let our denials – our failures – our false accusations toward Him – our lack of faith – our embarrassment or hesitation to proclaim our belief in Him – our broken promises of loyalty – it's easy to let all of these things keep us from Him. Like Peter you may want to go find a place where you can be alone and just weep.

But from the cross Jesus offered forgiveness.

After the resurrection – when Jesus was alone with Peter – He told Peter to lead His sheep – He told Peter He still wanted Him.

And He wants you tonight. Even after you've hurt Him...He wants you to know there is no limit to His love and forgiveness.

There is no pain which will keep Him away from you.

He loves you – even when it hurts...He will always love you. Come to Him tonight – seek His forgiveness and repent from your sins.

Come and kneel at the cross.

Close in prayer