

April 22, 2011 – Good Friday Service

1 Corinthians 15:3

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said.

I passed on to you what was most important

The death of Christ on the cross is central to all of time and eternity. For it was there that the human race was bought back (redeemed) to be brought back in to a right relationship with God. At Christmas we celebrate God coming into the world as a human being. Jesus was both God and human. But the cross was the purpose for which He came. The Incarnation was for Redemption. Don't ever believe that Jesus was martyred on the cross. The cross did not happen to Jesus, He came on purpose for it. The reason salvation is easy to obtain is because it cost God so much. At the cross sinful man and God merge with a crash on God's heart.

Christ died

Not everyone believes that Jesus actually died and arose from the dead. Ever hear of the "swoon" theory? It is the belief that Jesus did not actually die on the cross but just swooned or black out or went into a deep coma. Then later He was revived, and so the resurrection is a lie.

An advice columnist received this letter about the Resurrection: "Dear Uticus, Our preacher said on Easter that Jesus just swooned on the cross and the disciples nurtured Him back to health. What do you think? Sincerely, Bewildered."

Here was the response: "Dear Bewildered, Beat your preacher with a cat of nine tails with 39 heavy strokes. Nail him to a cross. Hang him in the sun for three hours. Run a spear through his heart. Embalm him. Put him in an airless tomb for 36 hours, and see what happens. Sincerely, Uticus."

Roman guards were the first to report the death of Jesus. They were experts at execution, and they would be put to death themselves if they allowed a condemned man to escape death. These soldiers were so certain Jesus was dead, they did not bother to break His legs. They thrust a spear into His body and out came blood and water (which occurs when the heart stops beating), giving them the final proof they needed.

Paul writes Christ died ... just as the Scriptures said. Paul was referring to the OT.

Daniel 9:26 - "After this period of sixty-two sets of seven, the Anointed One will be killed.

Further, Paul writes

Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. (again OT)

Isaiah 53:4-6 - Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on him the sins of us all.

I passed on to you what was most important (in all of history) ... Christ died (there is no doubt about that & He died for a purpose) for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. (OT & NT)

What does this mean for us tonight? If you accept the death of Jesus for your sins then you died with Him on the cross: Romans 6:6-11- We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him. We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. **11** So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

Have you made this decision about sin? Has sin died in you? It takes a long time to make this decision about the sin in you. Jesus died for the sin of the world, so sin must die in you, not be curbed, or suppressed, or counteracted, but crucified. When you make this moral decision it will be a great moment in your life. No one can make that decision but you, I can try to convince you, but you must decide.

Take time alone with God, and allow the Spirit of God to search you until you see the sin in you that is at war with the Spirit of God in you, and make the moral decision to let it die that you may be free from its power. You can not consider yourself to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus until you deal with this issue of your will before God. There is a co-crucifixion. Have you entered into the glorious privilege of being crucified with Christ until all that is left is the life of Christ in you?

I have been crucified with Christ...My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. Galatians 2:20