

Sermon for Good Friday

Date: April 3, 2026

Location: Zion – Colby, WI

Old Testament: Isaiah 52:13–53:12

Epistle Reading: Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9

Gospel Reading: John 19:17–30



Sermon Series: Songs of Hope in the Dark Night

Sermon Title: This Song Is Confession

Sermon Text: John 19:17–30

Hymns:

LSB 425 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross (v.1,3)

LSB 570 – Just As I Am (v.1,3,4)

LSB 436 – Go to Dark Gethsemane (v.1-3)

LSB 440 – Jesus, I Will Ponder Now (v. 1,2,5)

LSB 450 – O Sacred Head, Now Wounded (v. 1,3,7)

LSB 451 – Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted (v. 1,2)

LSB 456 – Were You There (v. 1-2)

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Text: John 19:16–30

So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.






So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but rather, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.” This was to fulfill the Scripture which says,

“They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished,” and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

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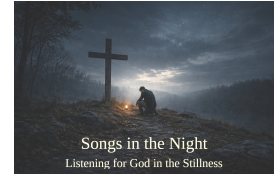
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Peace by yours in Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening – Where We Have Walked

We have spent these weeks of Lent learning how to wait through those dark times of life. We have listened to prayers spoken when answers delay. We have heard songs sung at night because faith still speaks when light is scarce. Tonight, the journey brings us to truly the darkest hour. Good Friday is strangely named because on that Friday the darkest event in all of the Universe, the darkest event in all of time occurred. It brings us to the place where hope looks finished.



The Cross and the Cry



John 19 records Jesus being marched out, carrying His own cross. The cheering crowds of just five days earlier are now jeering and insulting. Jesus was their hope and here they see their hopes dashed on Golgotha: Skill Hill. The disciples who slept through prayers in Gethsemane have now run to hide. The road Jesus walks is rough, and the weight of the cross and the weight of your sin is real.

They mount the hill and nails are driven. There is blood and cries of pain from: Jesus, the other two criminals, and the people who watch as their hope is hung up to die. The cross is lifted up. Soldiers divide garments. Passersby shake their heads. Hope is dying right before their eyes.

Jesus has spoken from the cross already. The words are astonishingly selfless:

Words of Forgiveness: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.¹”

Words of Salvation: “Truly, today you will be with me in paradise.²”

Words of Care: “Woman, behold, your son... Behold, your mother.³”

The pain He is enduring is nothing you could imagine. He lifts Himself up on the nails to gasp and speak again. It sound like the pain, stress, and approaching death are getting to Him:

Words of Abandonment: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?⁴”

This cry is often miss-heard as giving up on God. It is not. This cry is confession and salvation. Jesus is confessing who He is: The life and light of the world; the Savior of all who believe in Him. It is salvation for all who recognize this truth. Jesus teaches from the cross by giving us a song in the night, Psalm 22: the psalm of the Promised One.

1 Luke 23:34

2 Luke 23:43

3 John 19:26-27

4 Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22:1

This Song Is Confession

When Jesus quotes the opening line of Psalm 22, He is not grasping for words. In the Scriptures of Israel, to speak the first line is to call out the whole psalm. In those days most people could not read. The Psalms of the Bible were the hymns they sang in church each week. They sang them over and over, and over the years, memorized them. Nearly anyone could quote them verse by verse. Jesus is preaching even here. Especially here where hope looks lost.

Psalm 22 speaks of mockery:

He trusts in the LORD;
let Him deliver Him.⁵

Psalm 22 speaks of pierced hands and feet.⁶ It speaks of garments divided.⁷ None of this surprises heaven. None of this escapes the plan of God. All of it should grab your undivided attention. The sight on that cross is grotesque, bloody and gory. Don't look away. Hope is not dying there. It is being birthed into your eternity there.

From the cross, Jesus teaches those who hear him that day. He is also teaching you. Psalm 22 mentions you:

It shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall
come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn...⁸

These words of Psalm 22 were written nearly 1,000 years before Jesus was born, nearly 1,000 years before Jesus would hang on that cross, and nearly 3,000 years before this very day and this very moment. Those words are about you, for you, to teach you.

Jesus confesses He is the One promised long ago.⁹ The truth is this Psalm, and the events of that dark Friday, harken back even further. This is the oldest song. A song that reaches further back than king David. It reaches further back than Moses, or Abraham. This song came from back on an afternoon in a garden called Eden.

When this song was first sung it was the last words God spoke before Adam and Eve were walked out of the garden. God spoke of a Promised One who would be bruised and yet crush the serpent head. The promised hope spoken in fading Eden light is now confessed in Golgotha darkness.



The Weight We Cannot Carry

The cross reveals what sin costs: Not embarrassment. Not inconvenience. Sin costs death. The Bible says:

The wages of sin is death...¹⁰

- 5 Psalm 22:8
- 6 Psalm 22:16
- 7 Psalm 22:18
- 8 Psalm 30-31
- 9 Genesis 3:15
- 10 Romans 6:23

The Law of God presses in hard tonight. Human strength does not hold up. Loyalty dissolves. Courage evaporates. Even prayer strains for breath. When Jesus is forsaken, He stands where we belong. The suffering He bears cannot be imagined. It is Hell, your Hell. It is real.



That is why the cross unsettles us, especially if we really grasp what is happening there. We recognize ourselves there. We know a bit of the fear. We know a bit of the silence. There is a temptation to turn away and pretend it's not there, but it is. The deeper truth is: It is all yours, but do not turn away, do not walk away.

The Song Continues

As you read through Psalm 22 the despair deepens. It is darker than anything you will ever know. It moves through suffering and pain... but then it turns. It does not end in despair. It moves through misery toward proclamation:

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD.¹¹

and

They shall come and proclaim His righteousness.¹²



Jesus carries the whole psalm on His lips for you to hear and on His body for you to see. He carries the suffering and He carries the promise. He carries the future proclamation to a generation yet unborn. Those words “are you.” You here, born again of water and the Word.¹³ The promise Jesus gives on that cross, in Psalm 22 and as Adam and Eve leave Eden is for you.

When He later says, “I thirst.”¹⁴ Why? Because it is in the Psalm? No. He, the all eternal One, put it in the Psalm because He would need it, at this moment, in this time. He would need to moisten His throat, clear His air, because He would have something else to say.

Then He said it. The most important words ever spoken in all of Creation. The most important words ever spoken into your life. The most important words any spirit or human will ever hear in heaven, earth, or hell:

It is finished!¹⁵

With that, the song is done.

Finished does not sound triumphant tonight. Finished sounds like a quiet quit in the fight. Finished sounds like giving up. It is not!



11 Psalm 22:27

12 Psalm 22:31

13 John 3:3,5

14 John 19:28; Psalm 22:14-15

15 John 19:28-30; Psalm 22:31

Drawing Near to the Crucified Christ

We have a High Priest who sympathizes with our weakness.¹⁶ He does not observe suffering from a distance. He enters it. He prays in it with loud cries and tears.¹⁷ He takes it away from you. He carries it to your Hell...

...but not to suffer there. The suffering we see tonight is already done, past, gone. Holy Writ records:

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit in which He went and proclaimed to those in prison.¹⁸

Because of this, we are invited to draw near, to take and eat, take and drink of this broken Body and Blood. To remember His suffering? Yes, but far more, to remember His forgiveness, and your sins taken away. Behold He is:

The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!¹⁹

What we bring is small and weak, feeble and futile yet did you hear the hymn?

But worthless is my sacrifice, I own it;
Yet, Lord, for love's sake You will not reject it;
You will accept my gift in Your great meekness
And not shame me in my weakness.²⁰

(Paraphrased)

In the darkness, and nights of life, Jesus is the strength and life that carries you though. That is why this Friday is called "Good."

Waiting in the Night



The words were spoken, "It is finished" but Good Friday does not rush us forward. The Church waits in stillness and silence as Jesus lies in the tomb. The body is taken down. The stone is rolled into place. The song falls quiet.

The confession has been made. The promise has been kept. The work is finished, but the night still holds.

Still, the song has been sung. Hope comes.

16 Hebrews 4:15

17 Hebrews 5:7-9

18 1 Peter 3:18-19

19 John 1:29

20 O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken, v 14