

**Good Friday
April 19, 2019**

**“Jesus Speaks”
Sermon Preached by Pastor Gary Ulrich
American Lutheran Church of Sun City**

Good Friday, the Friday before Easter on which the crucifixion of Christ is told. Christians celebrate the passion and the suffering and death on the cross of Jesus Christ. Many people do this many different ways. Many people even call Good Friday Black Friday or Dark Friday. We have different people trying to nail themselves to the cross in a sacrificial thing - if I suffered as Jesus suffered. Some people go out and eat only fish on Friday, which is fine if you like fish. In other words, we are not arguing with anything that happens, but we do say in this service and in our hearts as Christians, this is a very, very holy day, a crucial day of the year because it celebrates what is believed to be the most momentous weekend in the history of this world. A holy day; the results of Christ suffering and death definitely make it a Good Friday.

As St. Paul declares to the church of Rome, God demonstrated, put in order, clearly shows the existence or proof or journey, giving evidence of his love for us. For while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The fulfillment of God's generous mercy toward undeserving people, the human world, God's free and undeserved favor to the sinful humanity and Jesus Christ's work of redemption, an unearned gift. We are in God's favor. That should be quite a celebration in our hearts.

This evening, we're not going to listen to the strikes and the bloodletting and the torture and the inhumane treatment and the humiliation of the suffering of Jesus Christ but to His words as he spoke and broke the silence of His willingness in fulfilling the mission of God. During his arrest, He spoke not a word in His defense or in complaining or in pointing fingers. In His capture, His false accusations before Caiaphas, before the crowd shouting, "Crucify him. Crucify him." And they just celebrated His kingship and coming into Jerusalem a short time before. Even as He endured the pain of the torture and humiliation, He said not a word. His defense before Pilate was just chat, but it was not a complaining, his silence acknowledging His very important journey, God's gift to play it out now to the world. Silence, the great silence of Jesus, a witness to His guiltless walk, his contempt of all accusations against Him, his astounding patience and willingness to suffer unjustly, the fulfillment of prophecy. We learn everything about Jesus, and we learned everything about God from the Bible. Isaiah says it, "And He was oppressed; driven hard; hard pressed; violently, unjustly tormented, and He opened not His mouth." He was stricken deeply and seriously affected and humiliated. He was pierced, punctured, cut, tortured. He was crushed, squeezed, and pressurized to almost make one feel hopeless, for our transgressions; our rebellion against God; our iniquities; immoral, unjust behavior; our state of being in the state of being born in sin and He opened not His mouth. St. Paul proclaims, "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for our sake, so we become righteous of God in Him." That's where reconciliation comes in. We have a God that loves and brings forth his only Son to reconcile us to Him. A restoration of good, holy, friendly life, a relationship with God, and now this evening, as He hangs on the cross, Jesus breaks the silence, breaks the silence on the cross of death with a few, short phrases, with His words. We listen. We listen almost at the command of God at His baptism where God looked down and said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Let's listen to God's pleasure. And in the transfiguration, the

heavens broke forth, and God says, "This is my Son. Listen to Him." Let us listen now to the pleasure of God's Son as Jesus the Christ bares his soul in words and direction in His last breaths on earth. In the fulfillment of His gift of righteousness and salvation, He speaks while carrying the weight of atonement for us and for humankind.

You're going to hear a pattern phrase that God uses all the time in one of his talks about forgiveness. Take it personal. Get into it as you hear the choir sing, and the music enlightens your heart. You're going to hear His statements about salvation, absolution in the midst of suffering and death. He delivers His promises of support and care, earthly, earthly treasures of love, of care, belonging, the attention to your loved ones. Love one another as the family of God. Love one another as you have been created. Cries and proclamations for assurance. In all humanity, uncertainty but God's ownership of us as we walk through. In a phrase you'll hear the recognition of human need, of human need and nourishment, but longing for the nourishment of God. God's completion for our salvation you'll hear in a very beautiful word, and then the astounding trust and the victory as our souls rest in God's care, in God's love. See and hear God's mercy and love for us all. Jesus' words shook the reality of the real world in which He lived in. As Matthew said and that moment, the curtain in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks were split, the tombs were opened and the many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised up. God's power and love and peace. Give thanks for the promise and the awesome power of God's word and promise and how this shook the earth to its core.

Listen, now, listen. This is a holy time for us. Put yourself into it. He comes to us now, shattering the defiance, the discord, the falsehoods that captures us and contains us and tempts us away from God the Father Almighty, who gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Listen to the words of Jesus. He is here now. Listen in the singing and in the verse. It's our participation as we listen to Jesus. Amen.