



Good Friday

Sermon Outline

2023

Theme: Hope in times of waiting

Key scriptures:

Lamentations 3:21-26 NIV

Hebrews 11:1 KJV

Matthew 27:38-56 NIV

1 Corinthians 15:53-58 The Message (MSG)



To be read aloud to begin:

Matthew 27:38-56 NIV

Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.

"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.



A note to the preacher:

Today is named 'Good Friday' because we celebrate what Jesus' death on the cross led to - the sacrifice only the blameless son of God could make for the forgiveness of our sins (1 John 2:1-2).

However, it is important to not fast-forward to the 'good' in Good Friday. We must sit in the significance of the sacrifice, and we must understand hope in the times we spend waiting.

Through this sermon, you will invite listeners to consider what Jesus' sacrifice means for them. Together, you will consider where God's hope has been revealed in times of waiting - at Easter, and throughout our lives.

We encourage you to share personally about your own experiences. As you prepare, ask yourself, 'What does Jesus' sacrifice mean for me?' and 'When have I experienced hope during a season of waiting?'

'When God gives you a vision and darkness follows, wait. God will bring the vision He has given you to reality in your life if you will wait on His timing.' - Oswald Chambers



Theme #1: Waiting

Expand on this: How does 'waiting' make you feel? Share an anecdote of feeling uncomfortable or out-of-place in a time of 'waiting'. Tie this into the Matthew 27:38-56 passage read aloud at the start - as each character mentioned is literally 'waiting' for something to happen.

You might like to expand more on two or three of the people referenced in the scripture above. How did they experience hope while waiting?

Who stuck out to you from the scripture as 'waiting'? The centurion? The rebels? The chief priests? The disciples? The women? The rocks and the curtain and the tombs that split open?

Each was waiting for Jesus' sacrifice to be made complete. Jesus himself waited to die on the cross - an excruciating, painful horror. Waiting is not always an active doing, bustling and being busy. Oswald Chambers also writes, "One of the greatest strains in life is the strain of waiting for God."

What does hope look like in the middle of waiting, especially when the waiting is painful?

Lamentations 3:21-26 (NIV) says, 'Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will wait for him." The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.'

Jesus 'endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God' (Hebrews 12:2) because of the joy set before him. His waiting was informed by the hope he had.

Expand further: What does the strain of waiting look like for your people? What are some of the painful places of waiting in your community now? Where does hope intersect and grow like a seed in this place?



Theme #2: Watching

Mark 15:38-41 'The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"'

Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.'

How many different types of 'watching' can you think of? Bird watching, streaming Netflix, looking in telescopes - there are so many ways of looking and seeing the world and creation. When we are in a season of waiting, how do we keep our eyes open to what Jesus needs us to see?

The women who gathered at Christ's cross truly saw him. They had journeyed with him, supported them with their own money (Luke 8:1-3) and now gathered to wait with him as he died. They watched him, eyes upon him. Are we seeing what God needs us to see, eyes on Jesus this season?

Many watched Jesus yet didn't see who he really was. The Centurion watched and had his eyes opened. Jesus himself watched the face of his mother on earth (John 19:26) and watched for his Father in heaven.

Some theologians link the final words of Jesus as reference to Psalm 22:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?

My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.

Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;

you are the one Israel praises.

In you our ancestors put their trust;

they trusted and you delivered them.

To you they cried out and were saved;

in you they trusted and were not put to shame.



But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
"He trusts in the Lord," they say,
"let the Lord rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."

Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.
From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother's womb you have been my God.'

Expand further: Share about a time when you've watched but haven't truly seen? What happens when you/we search for something in the wrong place or without proper focus? Share a spiritual practice you undertake to help you see Jesus daily.

Art or music: Share a favourite creative medium for 'seeing' Jesus. How do you take in his sacrifice in that place of mourning and grief? What helps you acknowledge what Jesus did for us on the cross?



Theme #3: Willing

Luke 22:42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."
(NIV)

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "'The days are coming,'" declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.'

Jesus was born from the womb of a woman, undergoing the incredibly humbling process (literally) of becoming human and growing into adulthood before he began his ministry and mission. He then demonstrated the ultimate love and humility in offering his life as our sacrifice.

But God had been waiting even longer to deliver on the promise of restoration for the world. Our Creator, Christ and Comforter Holy Spirit knew the day would come when the atonement would need to be made through the perfect lamb of God (1 Peter 1:18-21).

He gave up his life freely for us (John 10:18). We celebrate that we have a Christ who was willing to give his life in place for ours. Are we willing to live for the One who died to save us?

Read aloud:

1 Corinthians 15:53-58 The Message (MSG)

In the resurrection scheme of things, this has to happen: everything perishable taken off the shelves and replaced by the imperishable, this mortal replaced by the immortal. Then the saying will come true: Death swallowed by triumphant Life! Who got the last word, oh, Death? Oh, Death, who's afraid of you now?

It was sin that made death so frightening and law-code guilt that gave sin its leverage, its destructive power. But now in a single victorious stroke of life, all three—sin, guilt, death—are gone, the gift of our Master, Jesus Christ. Thank God! With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort.



Conclusion

This Good Friday, we acknowledge Jesus as our hope in the waiting time. We don't rush past the pain to get to the resurrection but sit with the significance of his sacrifice. Only then can our waiting and watching turn to willing obedience to worship God as is fitting.

Today we seek what God is saying as we wait, looking for the hope promised and knowing that Jesus is faithful to deliver us. Christ's sacrifice is permanent and perfect, and we can be confident in God's sufficiency.

So where does hope need to be revealed in your life as you wait today?

The Song Book Song #772 - When We Cannot See The Way

*'When we cannot see our way,
Let us trust and still obey;
He who bids us forward go,
Cannot fail the way to show.*

*Though the sea be deep and wide,
Though a passage seem denied,
Fearless let us still proceed,
Since the Lord vouchsafes to lead.*

*Though it be the gloom of night,
Though we see no ray of light,
Since the Lord himself is there,
'Tis not meet that we should fear.'*



As appropriate: Reflection, Song or Mercy Seat

Prayer

God, the One who created us. You have seen us, restored us and redeemed us. For those of our friends and family, community or even those who feel a stranger and estranged today who need your comfort and love in the waiting, refresh us as only you can we pray.

Show us ways to see and be seen. Communicate with us clearly, and where we feel there are riddles, or we are riddled with anxiety and unbelief – help us to focus on your Son and his sacrifice. Waiting to die, knowing he was the only sacrifice worthy.

Watching the faces of the world turned towards him, some comprehending and others not. Willing in the face of the ultimate rending. Be with us as we face that waiting and watching today. Let us be willing to know you and know one another. We praise you, for you are fearfully and wonderfully perfect God.

Songs

- When We Cannot See The Way: The Song Book of the Salvation Army #772
- When We Cannot See The Way – Thomas Kelly – SASB 689; Tune 261 or 260. Or Tune 263 (alt. Arrangement that includes the chorus)
- Living Hope - Phil Wickham and Brian Johnson / Bethel songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7106807
- Thank You Jesus For The Blood - Charity Gayle songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7172456
- Above All – Lenny LeBlanc, Paul Baloche songselect.ccli.com/Songs/2672885
- The Old Rugged Cross – George Bernard – SASB 191; Tune 520
- Man Of Sorrows – Hillsong songselect.ccli.com/Songs/6476063
- When I Survey the Wondrous Cross - Isaac Watts - SASB 208; Tune 36 or 30. Or Tune 875 (alt. Arrangement using a third traditional tune with new chorus by Chris Tomlin)
- At The Cross (Love Ran Red) - Chris Tomlin songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7017786
- How Deep The Father's Love For Us – Stuart Townsend - SASB 32; Tune 663 songselect.ccli.com/Songs/1558110
- Worthy is the Lamb - Darlene Zschech/ Hillsong - SASB 201; Tune 947 songselect.ccli.com/Songs/3217555



- It Was Finished Upon That Cross – CityAlight songselect.ccli.com/Songs/7171907
- O Come and look awhile on him – Frederick William Faber – SASB 188; Tune 49 or 18
- There is a Redeemer – Melody & Keith Green – SASB 204; Tune 881
- Were you there when they crucified my Lord? – Trad. Spiritual – SASB 206; Tune 921