

Good Friday

"Jesus Became Your Sin."

April 15, 2022 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

In Nomine Iesu

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The hymn we just sang describes how drastically the appearance of Jesus changed on Good Friday. By the time He was nailed to the cross, He had been repeatedly slapped and punched. His face was bruised and swollen. A crown of thorns had been driven into His skull. Blood dripped from the wounds of His scourging and from the nail holes opened in His hands and feet. All His clothes had been taken away from Him. He hung there in great shame and terrible agony.

His appearance shocked those who passed by. The prophet Isaiah wrote that *"his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind.... [A]nd as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."* (52:14, 53:3). Jesus described Himself in Psalm 22 as *"a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people"* (v. 6).

But the ugliness and wretchedness that could be seen was only a faint reflection of what Jesus was suffering. The greatest burden He carried was invisible. The source of His most intense pain was hidden from human eyes. Those hideous marks, that unbearable weight, came from us. *"[H]e was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities.... [T]he LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all"* (Isa. 53:5,6).

There in His disfigured face and whip-striped body, you see your sin. There in that public spectacle with the crowd laughing at Him and mocking Him, you see your shame. It is more than we can imagine. It is more than we could bear. But we must not turn away. If we don't understand why Jesus was on the cross, then we will never understand how far we have fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23).

This is the question that each of us must ask ourselves as we look upon the crucified Christ: "Did I do this?" It is easy to point our finger at the Jewish religious leaders. They weren't going to stop until Jesus was dead, even if they had to tell lies and convene a sham trial to get it done. Or we can point our finger at Pontius Pilate and the Roman soldiers. Pilate gave the order for crucifixion, and the soldiers carried it out.

But you and I are no less guilty of Jesus' death. He went to the cross to pay for sin. If you have ever sinned, you are complicit in His death. You should see yourself in the crowds on that Friday. You should hear your voice in the chorus calling for His crucifixion. You should picture yourself in the band of soldiers taking cheap shots at Jesus and mocking Him. You should see your face among the satisfied faces of all who watched Jesus die.

But as you look upon Jesus hanging there on the cross, He does not look back at you with anger. He looks at you with compassion liked He looked at the thief crucified nearby and at His

weeping mother. The look on His face says, "I am here *for you*. I am here to save you. Your soul is worth this suffering. I accept this anguish and pain. I willingly take this burden."

Jesus went to the cross out of love for you. He went there to obtain your forgiveness by pouring out His holy blood. He took into Himself and onto Himself all the ugliness of your sin, all your guilt, all your shame. This was the will of His Father. There was no other way to save you. "*For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*" (2Co. 5:21).

Your sins were nailed to the cross with Jesus on Good Friday. God doesn't see them on you anymore. All He sees on you is the righteousness, the perfect obedience, of His Son. Jesus went to the cross to accomplish this for you. He became dirtied, so you would be cleansed of your sin. He accepted your shame, so you would have glory and honor. He became ugly, so you would be beautiful in God's sight. He embraced your death, so you would have eternal life.

All of this was done for you. It is finished! *Thanks be to God. Amen.*

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