

Good Friday

Hebrews 10:26-31: "The Hands of the Living God"

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### In Nomine Iesu

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**Hebrews 10:26-31** – For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, *"Vengeance is Mine; I will repay."* And again, *"The Lord will judge His people."* It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. <sup>(ESV)</sup>

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When we see Jesus hanging on the cross, suffering in anguish, how could we ever doubt these words? *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."* When we hear Him cry out, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me,"* we know how horrifying the wrath of God is.

God hates sin. He put His imprint of perfection on the world and everything in it. He made man in His own holy image. His creation was never meant to know sin, pain, and death. When His work was complete, He declared all of it to be *"very good."*

And then one of His chief angels rebelled against Him and enticed the first man and woman to do the same. *"[S]in came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned"* (Rom. 5:12). Fallen mankind deserved to die. We had perfection, and we threw it away. The holy God was perfectly justified to damn us all to hell.

But that is not what He did. He looked down on this fallen world and had compassion. And this is how He showed His love: He sent His only-begotten Son (Joh. 3:16). The Son of God took on flesh, so that He could give up His holy life as a sacrifice for all sin. It was no mistake that He was hanging on the cross. He was exactly where His heavenly Father wanted Him to be.

Jesus was being punished by God the Father for all sin. He felt the vengeance of God for every big and little sin, for every intentional and unintentional sin, for every setting aside of the law of Moses for whatever reason. You and I do not grasp how serious our sins are and how very far away we are from the holiness of God. But Jesus knew. He felt God's wrath for each and every sin until the total price had been paid.

Does this not touch your heart? Can you sit there unmoved? Jesus suffered and died for the sins of every person in human history. He suffered and died for you. Many in the world do not care. They have heard about the death of Jesus, but it does not affect them. "Maybe He deserved it," they think. Or they joke that only the really bad people needed Jesus to do this for them. But they are doing just fine without Him.

Our text says, “How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?” When you see what Jesus did for you on this day, you cannot remain comfortable with sin. Sin and the death it brings leave dark, ugly stains on everything. Look at all the pain it caused the perfect Jesus.

We cannot hold onto Jesus and our sin. We cannot be faithful to the Word and the world. “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.” If we embrace our sin, we reject Jesus’ sacrifice. If we continue in our sin and spurn the Son of God, then we will fall into the wrathful hands of the living God. And that is a fearful thing.

But “if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1Jo. 1:9). God the Father forgives our sins because Jesus poured out His blood to wash them all away. He presented His face for beating, His back for flogging, His head for thorns, and His feet and hands for the nails.

Those gracious hands—hands that created; hands that fed; hands that healed; hands that blessed. He opened those hands to receive the cold spikes. He opened those hands to take all that is wrong in the world and bring us back together with God.

Those hands still open, but no longer to receive suffering. They open to distribute blessings, the blessings won by the death of our merciful Lord. He poured those blessings over you at the font. He covers you with them through His Word. He feeds you with them at the Communion rail.

To all who repent of their sins and put their trust in Him—to you and me—, Jesus says, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (Joh. 10:28). You do not have to fear the wrath of the living God. Because of what your crucified Savior did for you, “the hands of the living God” now guard you, comfort you, and lead you on the way to His heavenly kingdom.

*We pray:* O Lord Jesus Christ,

Wide open are Thy hands,  
Paying with more than gold  
The awful debt of guilty men,  
Forever and of old.

Ah, let me grasp those hands,  
That we may never part,  
And let the power of their blood  
Sustain my fainting heart. *Amen.*

*(Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary #265, vv. 1-2)*

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