

Sermon April 14, 2017 - Good Friday – Morning

Commandment Two

Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9



Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.¹⁶ Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from

death, and he was heard because of his reverence.⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Dear Friends in Christ

On this Good Friday, I would like to meditate on the Second Commandment, where God tells us: “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.”

Here God desires that we use his name properly. That we should fear, love and trust in God so that we call upon it in every trouble. That’s called . . . prayer. Just as he invites us do when he says through King David: “. . . call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.” (Psalm 50:15).

Prayer and keeping the Second Commandment, is the life of dependence on God for everything.

When you don’t believe or trust in God, you don’t pray to him. When you do believe and trust in God, you pray. Prayer is a no-brainer for the believer.

It’s really no surprise, then, that the believingly obedient, reverent, submissive Jesus is always praying to his Father, especially in the day of trouble. For example, he prays when he faces the ferocious onslaught of Satan’s attacks through Peter’s denials, Judas’ betrayal, Israel’s unbelief, and Pilate’s bloody actions by handing the sinless, innocent Jesus to be crucified but releasing the murderer, terrorist Barabbas.

Just before his final hour had come, he prayed. In the Gospel of John chapter 17, we also see Jesus praying for himself (John 17:1–5), asking the Father for the promised gift (cf 12:28) of his glorification through suffering and death. He prays for his disciples (17:6–19), that his Father would preserve them in an alien and hostile world, sanctify them in the truth of his Word, and equip them as apostles to preach the Gospel to the world. He prays for his future disciples, who will believe in him through the preaching of his apostolic witnesses (17:20–26). He prays for their unity, “that they all may be one” (17:21), and that they would remaining with him. Jesus prayed. Just as

the writer of the letter to the Hebrews tells us: “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears...”

So he did. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when his hour had come, the hour of his suffering and his death, the drinking of the cup of God’s wrath against all sin and every sinner, yes there, Jesus prays, and the Bible tells us he prayed earnestly. (Luke 22:24) He “offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death” (Heb 5:7). As his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow, “even to death” (Mt 26:38), the praying went like this: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39, 42; cf Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42). Jesus prayed, this is Jesus’ High Priestly work! On his way to do the “it is finished” job of offering his perfect and obedient life as the one and only sacrifice of atonement for all sin, Jesus prays, intercedes for you and for your salvation.

Jesus was “made perfect” because he lived totally by faith in his Father’s promise to use him to become “the source of eternal salvation” (Heb 5:9) for all sinners.

Jesus did what Adam did not and could not do. Jesus perfectly succeeded where Adam miserably failed. Jesus, as the second and last Adam and the head of a new humanity, lived by faith. In other words, Jesus was the perfect human; he was totally dependent on his Father’s will to achieve the world’s salvation that he accomplished in his Good Friday “it is finished” suffering for all sin and every sinner.

Again, as Jesus “offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death” (Heb 5:7), they went like this: “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will” (Mt 26:39). And what was the Father’s will? The Father’s will, Isaiah says, is to lay on Jesus “the iniquity of us all” (Is 53:6); that he would “bear their iniquities” (53:11); and be “numbered with the transgressors” (53:12).

Jesus did that for you and me. He was able to, because he was sinless. Was he tempted? Of course! Just “as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15).

We are constantly tempted; the difference is that we more often than not, we fail to stand up against temptation, so we sin. But the good news is that for your sake, sinless and perfect Jesus gets counted as the sinner on the cross. This is what it takes to save you. Jesus takes all your sin away from you, wraps himself with it, and bears it in his body on the cross. He bears the sin of Paul, the former blasphemer, persecutor, and killer. He bears the sin of Peter, who, as he denied Jesus three times, misused God’s name by calling down curses on himself and swearing falsely. He bears the sin of King David, the adulterer and murderer. Yes, Jesus has and carries all the sins of every person as well as yours in his body to make satisfaction for all sin with his divine blood, which gushes and drips from his crucified body.

All this is for you. So St. Paul says in Gal 3:13 that “for us” Christ Jesus “became a curse.” And that “For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor 5:21) It all happened as the Prophet of Old had foretold. Isaiah spoke about Jesus when he said: “He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors [sinners]” (Is 53:12).

Transgressors! That’s you! So Jesus intercedes. He prays as the great High Priest from the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23:34).

This is his constant prayer for you too! After all, you think you know what you’re doing, but do you? We don’t, really. We fail to live by faith, and therefore we don’t pray

either at home or with the baptized holy and royal priesthood at church. You let your old Adam run your life. You let your sinful nature be the lord of your life. So you misuse God's name to curse people instead of blessing them. You misuse God's name to commit perjury, cast spells using God's name for some kind of manipulative magic (white or black). You misuse God's name to tell all sorts of lies and to deceive.

Consequently, you live inhumanly or inhumanely because you refuse to live dependently on God through faith—a faith that obediently prays in the way of the Second Commandment, that prays and calls upon God's name in every trouble, praises, and gives thanks.

Here is the good news for you this Good Friday. Jesus, the Son of God, is the great High Priest for you. His dying breath was this: "The salvation job that I came to do, 'It is finished.'" Accomplished! Totally and completely! You are given to "hold firmly" to this truth. After all, what he says and does for you is certain and sure.

Today, then hear the Good News, that the "throne of his Good Friday grace" is extended to you today. Confidently, I as your pastor, declare to you Christ's forgiving mercy and grace. He is the great High Priest, and his prayer for you and for your forgiveness has been answered. The Father listens. He hears his crucified and risen Son on your behalf. His sacrifice did atone for you. You are forgiven. All your sin is answered for. The body and blood that Jesus offered and shed on the cross counts for your salvation. So every time you come to the Lord's Table, he actually gives you his Good Friday body and blood to eat and drink with the bread and wine. It's yours, it is for you.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.