



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

New Testament Survey

Lesson 15 – Our Suffering Savior on Good Friday

Good Friday

After Jesus was arrested, His disciples ran away. Peter and John, however, followed at a distance to see what would happen. On that day Peter disowned his Lord three times. John witnessed the crucifixion. Judas hanged himself.

Jesus had a preliminary hearing before Annas, a former high priest who was the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. At this hearing Jesus was slapped on the face; this was only the beginning of the physical abuse Jesus endured that night for us.

Jesus was then sent to Caiaphas for trial. At this trial the Jewish leaders resorted to false witnesses in order to condemn Him. But these liars could not agree. Finally, as a last resort, Caiaphas asked Jesus under oath whether He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus swore that He was the Christ, and they immediately convicted Him of blasphemy. Jesus was thus condemned for telling the truth. It would have been blasphemy if anyone else had answered as Jesus did.

Apparently, the night trial was not really legal. Therefore, there was another trial after sunrise. The Jewish high court again condemned Jesus for blasphemy.

Jesus was then led to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for another trial. This trial was necessary because the Jews at that time did not have the authority to put anyone to death. Jesus was not accused of blasphemy at His trial before Pilate. The Romans did not consider blasphemy to be a crime for which someone should be put to death. Therefore, Jesus was now charged with rebelling against the Roman Caesar because He claimed to be a king. This charge was a lie, and the Jewish leaders knew it was a lie.

By questioning Jesus, Pilate determined that this charge was a lie, and that Jesus was no threat to Caesar. Jesus' kingdom was not of this world. Pilate became convinced that Jesus was not guilty of any crime. He knew that the Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus, and that is why they wanted Him to be put to death.

Pilate tried various methods to get Jesus released: he sent Him to Herod Antipas; he gave the people a choice between releasing Jesus or the notorious criminal, Barabbas; and he tried to arouse the people's pity. But Pilate was too much of a coward to do the just thing and release Jesus. He finally gave in to the insistent voices of the Jewish leaders and to the mob they incited, and Pilate ordered the crucifixion of Jesus.

Crucifixion was a terrible way to die. It involved great bodily suffering, as well as public shame and ridicule. Jesus endured this physical suffering without any drugs or pain killers. But Jesus' physical suffering was as nothing compared with the spiritual suffering He endured as the Substitute for sinners. Jesus, the Son of God, was truly forsaken by God, as He cried out from the cross. He was cursed by God as all sinners deserve to be cursed. The apostle Paul wrote: **"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us"** (Galatians 3:13). Again Paul wrote: **"For He (God) made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"** (2 Corinthians 5:21). The prophet Isaiah had described the scene over 700 years earlier and the reason for it. **"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. ... the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ... Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief** (Isaiah 53:5-6, 10). These are the things we should think about as we read about Jesus' suffering.

But finally, the suffering of hell passed. Jesus cried out in victory: **"It is finished!** (John 19:30). He then willingly gave Himself over to death. It was a Good Friday indeed on which our Lord died, for by that death He won life for us. **"Our Lord Jesus Christ ... died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him"** (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10).

Jesus did not stay dead. He rose again on the third day, just as He had said. Strangely enough, His enemies remembered His predictions and guarded His tomb, but His disciples seem to have forgotten His promises in their hopelessness and despair. They did not expect him to rise again, even though He had told them He would.

The hours

It seems that when Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to time, they use the Jewish method, which begins in the morning around 6:00 a.m. Thus, "the sixth hour" would be noon. It seems John, however, who wrote his Gospel at a later time, used the Roman method of counting time, which starts at midnight or noon. Thus, when John says "the sixth hour", it would be either 6:00 a.m. or 6:00 p.m. In either case, the times given by the Gospel writers were only approximate.

Read the listed passages as you study each of the events below:

Peter follows Jesus (Matthew 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54-55; John 18:15-16, 18)

John knew the high priest and was permitted to enter the courtyard. John talked to the girl who watched the door so that Peter was also permitted to enter.

Before Annas (John 18:19-24)

At this hearing Jesus was slapped on the face unjustly by an attendant.

The first trial before the Jewish court (Matthew 26:57,59-68; Mark 14:53, 55-65; Luke 22:63-65)

Here we have an example of perjury just as at Naboth's trial (see 1 Kings 21:1-16) and at Stephen's trial (Acts 6:8-15). What a terrible travesty of justice: the judges looking for false witnesses! But Jesus was not convicted by their lies, but He was convicted because He told the truth under oath that He was (and is) the Messiah. Notice how Jesus was mocked as a prophet and beaten as a criminal. Later they made fun of Jesus as a king (with a "crown" and a robe).

Peter denies Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:56-62; John 18:17, 25-27)

The first time he simply denied Jesus. The second time he swore his denial. The third time he cursed and swore as he denied his Lord in fear. But when Jesus looked at Peter, he immediately regretted what he had done.

The second meeting of the Jewish court (Matthew 27:1-2; Mark 15:1; Luke 22:66 – 23:1)

The end of Judas Iscariot (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18)

There is a similarity between Peter's denial of Jesus and Judas' betrayal of Jesus. But there is also a difference. Judas regretted his action, but he did not turn to Jesus in repentance, as Peter did.

Before Pilate (Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 15:2-5; Luke 23:2-4; John 18:28-38)

A new charge was brought against Jesus: rebellion and insurrection. If we remember what Jesus said on the previous Tuesday about giving to Caesar what is Caesar's, it becomes obvious that the charge was false. Jesus explained that His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom, but a kingdom of truth. Pilate did not fully understand what Jesus meant, but he did know that Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against Him.

Before Herod Antipas (Luke 23:5-16)

Jesus did not say a single thing in Herod's court. Herod wanted Jesus to entertain him by doing a miracle, but that did not happen. Pilate and Herod became friends in dealing with this Jesus problem.

Barabbas (Matthew 27:15-26; Mark 15:6-15; Luke 23:17-25; John 18:39-40)

Pilate offered the Jews a choice between releasing Barabbas or Jesus. To Pilate's surprise, they chose to release Barabbas and called for Jesus to be crucified. They told Pilate they would bear the responsibility for Jesus' death.

Trying to arouse sympathy for Jesus (Matthew 27:26-31; Mark 15:15-20; Luke 23:25; John 19:1-16)

Pilate had Jesus scourged and then brought Him out to the crowd, thinking they would be satisfied. But they threatened Pilate by referring to Caesar, and Pilate, in his weakness, gave in to their desire.

On the way to Golgotha (Matthew 27:31-32; Mark 15:20-21; Luke 23:26-32; John 19:16-17)

By this time Jesus must have been very weak. He started out carrying His own cross, but soon Simon carried it for Him. Jesus told the sorrowful women not to weep for Him but for themselves and their children. Jesus was referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem that took place in 70 AD.

The crucifixion (Matthew 27:33-43; Mark 15:22-32; Luke 23:33-38; John 19:17-24)

Jesus was numbered with the criminals. Pilate chose the words for the title on the cross and would not change them. The soldiers divided Jesus' clothing.

Jesus' first word from the cross: "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do**" (Luke 23:34).

A robber turns to Jesus (Matthew 27:44; Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39-43)

One robber rebuked the other for making fun of Jesus. Then he turned to Jesus in prayer, and Jesus spoke to him the second word: "**Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise**" (Luke 23:43).

Jesus makes provision for His mother (John 19:25-27)

Even while He was dying, Jesus obeyed the Fourth Commandment for us, providing for His mother by giving her to His disciple John. His third word was to Mary and John; To Mary He said: "**Woman, behold your son!**" (v. 26), to John He said: "**Behold your mother!**" (v. 27).

The three dark hours from noon to three (Matthew 27:45-49; Mark 15:33-36; Luke 23:44-46; John 19:28-30)

The fourth word reveals the depth of Jesus' spiritual suffering for us. Jesus endured the pains of hell in our place: "**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" (Matthew 27:46). This was a clear reference to Psalm 22.

The fifth word shows us Jesus' human nature: "**I thirst**" (John 19:28). He was given sour wine.

The sixth word: "**It is finished!**" (John 19:30).

The seventh word: "**Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit**" (Luke 23:46).

The death of Jesus and accompanying events (Matthew 27:50-56; Mark 15:37-41; Luke 23:46-49; John 19:30)

At Jesus' death the curtain in the temple was torn from top to bottom. This indicated that heaven has been opened for sinners through Jesus' death as the sacrifice that atoned for sin. Note the words that the people said and that certain dead persons in the Jerusalem area rose from the dead. These resurrected people appeared alive in the city after Jesus' own resurrection on Sunday.

Questions

1. What led Peter to deny his Lord?
2. What is the difference between the remorse of Judas and the remorse of Peter?
3. How was Jesus' mission as a prophet of God ridiculed?
4. What three charges were brought against Jesus when He was led to Pilate?
5. Prove that all of these charges were lies.
6. Why was Jesus silent in the court of Herod Antipas?
7. List the attempts Pilate made to release Jesus.
8. Why did these attempts fail?
9. For whom did Jesus want the women who were weeping for Him to weep? Why?
10. Which of the seven words explain the depths of Jesus' suffering?
11. What do the seven words say about the purpose of Jesus' death?
12. What do the seven words say about the results of Jesus' death?
13. What is the significance of the tearing of the Temple curtain?