

## Luke 23:44-46 - "Jesus' Last Words from the Cross"

Pr. Kurt A. VanFossan - Good Friday 2022

The Wednesday before last we heard Jesus say, "*It is finished*" as He hung on a cross, forsaken and cursed by God for our sins. His work of redeeming us was finished. "*The curtain of the temple was torn in two*" (Matthew 27:51), opening the way for every repentant sinner who believes in the promised Savior, Jesus Christ, to enter into God's presence in paradise, like the thief next to Jesus.

But Jesus wasn't finished speaking. Luke records His final words from the cross, "*Father, into Your hand I commit my spirit!*" And having said this He *breathed His last*." Jesus was quoting words from Psalm 31:5, a Psalm of trust. In the midst of being forsaken by His disciples and even His heavenly Father, Jesus remains confident in faith—trusting the Word of God. Listen to these words from Psalm 31. "*Into Your hand I commit my spirit; "You have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God."* In regard to Jesus, these words refer to the promise of His resurrection from this damning death. Psalm 31 also includes these words, "*I will rejoice and be glad in Your steadfast love, because You have seen My affliction; You have known the distress of My soul, and You have not delivered Me into the hand of the enemy; You have set My feet in a broad place*" (vv. 7-8). Jesus' last dying words were words of hope and Good News!

This is living by faith not by sight. On the one hand Jesus knew full well that His Father had forsaken Him on the cross. But He at the same time trusted in the truth of God's Word that He would rise again and be given authority over "*a broad place*"—over all creation. All that was to be taken away from man because of the sin of the first Adam, including life itself, was taken away from our substitute, Jesus Christ. But He trusted in God's promise to also restore all that had been taken away. That restoration was fulfilled by the same Man who allowed His life to be taken away from Him, the New Adam, Jesus Christ.

On Good Friday it certainly didn't look like this was going to happen. It looked like Jesus had been outwitted by the religious leaders and overpowered by the Romans. But our Lord, with His Father and the Holy Spirit, never loses control of any situation. Remember Jesus' words to Pilate: "*You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above*" (John 19:11). Through His death, Jesus carried our sins and death to their everlasting home with Satan, so that He could also carry us to our everlasting home with Him.

It's through this Good News that God calls and enables us to put our trust in Him—to live by faith in the Word of God, not by what we see or experience in this fallen world. At the worst times in life, when all appears to be hopeless; when by our human sight and reason we can see no way out; when our sins have caused what appears to be irreparable damage to ourselves and others, our Lord, through His death and resurrection assures us that we need not despair. The Good News of God's promise of forgiveness and eternal life through our Baptism and God given faith in Jesus Christ enables us to not give up but to give in to God, and then to watch how He turns darkness into light; our troubles into blessings; eternal death into eternal life.

Psalm 31 ends with these words: "*Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD!*"

All glory be to God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.