

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

Tonight We Are On Holy Ground. On This Night The Sinless Son Of God Died For The Sins Of The World, For Your Sins And Mine. But How Could The Sinless Son Of God Die? Only Because He Wanted To Die. There Is No Other Reason. Unlike Other Human Beings, Jesus, God In Human Form, Had A Choice: He Could Not Die, Or He Could Die. It Was Up To Him. But Because He Was The Sinless Son Of God, He Really Only Had One Choice. Why So? Because The Father Sent Him To Die. From The Moment He Was Conceived By The Holy Spirit In The Womb Of His Mother Mary And Born On That First Christmas... He Was Destined To Die On That Cross On That First Good Friday. Would He? That Was His Struggle In The Garden Of Gethsemane, As He Prayed: **“Father, If You Are Willing, Take This Cup From Me; Yet Not My Will, But Yours Be Done.” Yet Not My Will, But Yours Be Done.** Why Would He Make Such Choice? Love. Love For His Father Who Sent Him And Love For Us..... **“Jesus Chose To Die Because Of Love.”**

I. It's Very Important That We Understand That Jesus Had This Choice To Die Or Not To Die Because, If He Didn't Have A Choice... Then There Is Nothing Loving About What He Did.

A. It May Seem Odd To Talk About Jesus Having A Choice About Dying. Nobody Else Has That Choice. When Death Comes Our Way, We Simply Must Die. There Is No Choice. But Jesus Is Different. Of Course, He Is A Human Being Just Like Us, Except For Sin. But He Is More. He Is God. That's What Christmas Is All About: The Word Became Flesh. God Became Man. He Was God And Man In One Person. We See This In The Garden Of Gethsemane As John Tells Us: **“Jesus Knowing All That Was Going To Happen To Him, Went Out And Asked Them, ‘Who Is It You Want?’ “Knowing All That Was Going To Happen To Him” (V. 4, Esv).** As God In Human Form Jesus Wasn't Surprised By Anything. He Knew Exactly What Was Going To Happen. So, Even Though He Was God... He Did Not Fight.... He Did Not Run. He Had Made A Choice: He Would Die. Because If He Resisted..... They Wouldn't Have Been Able To Do Anything To Him. When The Armed Mob Told Him That They Were Looking For **“Jesus Of Nazareth”**, Jesus Didn't Lie Or Deny It But Said: **“I Am He.”** And Then We Are Told: **“When Jesus Said To Them, ‘I Am He’, They Drew Back And Fell To The Ground.”** How Strange. Jesus Speaks And A Mob With Weapons Falls Backward To The Ground? Because Jesus Is God John Tells Us This Story So What We Would Clearly Understand That Nothing Could Be Done Against Jesus Unless....Unless He Let Them Do It. For Jesus Had A Choice: He Could Use His Power As God To Defend Himself Or He Could Not Use His Power As God And Suffer And Die ... And We Know His Choice....

B. And So We Read: **“... The Band Of Soldiers And Their Captain And The Officers Of The Jews Arrested Jesus And Bound Him” (V. 12, Esv).** Jesus Had Made His Choice, He Had Prayed To His

Father: **“Not My Will, But Yours Be Done.”** This Is Why Jesus Rebuked Peter Who Drew His Sword To Defend Him. Didn't Peter Understand That Jesus Didn't Need His Help? Didn't He See The Mob Fall To The Ground? We Don't Want To Be Too Harsh With Peter, But Clearly He Didn't Understand That Jesus Didn't Need His Help. Peter Did Not Understand That Jesus Had Made A Choice....A Choice Not To Use His Great Powers As God But A Choice To Die As He Told Peter: **“Shall I Not Drink The Cup The Father Has Given Me?” (V 11, Esv).** This Is Love. Love For The Father Who Sent Him To Die, And Love For You, For Me.-And All People And So We Call This Day **“Good”** Friday. Not Because It Was Good For Jesus, But Because It Was Good For Us And All Mankind Just As Caiaphas, The High Priest Said: **“It Would Be Expedient That One Man Should Die For The People” (V. 14).** Jesus Died As Our Substitute. He Took Our Place To Be Humiliated, To Suffer, To Die And To Be Forsaken Of God....All For Us. And Did So Out Of Love Because, As John Tells Us, He Knew **“All That Was Going To Happen To Him”...(V. 4, Esv)** And This Means, Of Course, That He Also Knew That On The Third Day He Would Be Raised From The Dead And Glorified At The Right Hand Of His Father.

ii. Even Though It Is Painful To Stand At The Foot Of The Cross Tonight... We Also Know That Easter Is Coming. We Know That On The Third Day He Was Raised From Dead Filling Us With Much Joy. But Tonight...Tonight Our Hearts Are Heavy With Sadness As We See The Horrible Price For Our Sins: The Death Of The Son Of God. If You Ever Forget How Serious Your Sins AreJust Remember The Cross...Look At Jesus On The Cross And Remember.....This Was The Price For You To Have Forgiveness, Life And Salvation From God.

A. For We Know With Much Shame And Guilt That Our Sins Put Jesus On The Cross Just As Much As Judas, The High Priest And Pilate Did. Every Sin That We Commit Added To His Anguish, To The Wrath Of God That Was Poured Out On Him.. This Is Why We Confess Our Sins To God And Seek His Forgiveness. But We Also Pray... That Even As He Died For Our Sins... We Might By The Power Of Our Baptism Also Die To Sin And Live For Him Who Died And Rose Again For Us As Paul Says In His Letter To The Romans: **“We Were Buried With Him Through Baptism Into Death. In Order That, Just As Christ Was Raised From The Dead...We Too Might Live A New Life” (A6 4, Esv).**

B. We Must Confess To God And To One Another That We Do Not Always Live This New Kind Of Life. But Even As Jesus Dealt So Graciously And Kindly With Peter, Who Had Acted Contrary To God's Will, He Deals Graciously And Kindly With Us.....—Like Peter, We Too Are Forgiven...Because Every One Of Our Sins Of The Past, The Present And Till The End Of Our Lives Has Been Paid For And Canceled With The Shedding Of His Precious Blood And His Death On That Cross...Because We Know That **By His Wounds We Have Been Healed.** .

Conclusion: How Can We Not Be Filled With Sadness And Shame Seeing The Sinless Jesus Suffer And Be Forsaken Of God Because Of What We Have Done? Yet This Suffering Was Not Forced Upon Him. He

Made A Choice. A Choice Of Love.....Love For His Father Who Sent Him For This Very Purpose; And Love For Us So That We Might Be Freed From Sin And Death.. And That's Why We Are Here Tonight. As Painful As This Night Is....It Is Still **“Good”** Friday. And With The Coming Of Easter Our Sadness Will Be Turned To Joy....On Sunday.....Come Rejoice With Us. Amen.