

Mark 15 - Good Friday Service 2025

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[0 : 0 0] Well, let's make a start. Let me give you a warm welcome to our Good Friday service. It's good to have you with us here this morning. My name is Steve. If you've not met me, I'm the pastor of the church here. It's great to have you with us this morning. Let me just give you a rough plan for our time together this morning. This isn't a sort of normal service. As you can understand, the chairs aren't even set out like we would normally have them. We are coming together around the Lord's table, share communion together. That's the plan for our meeting.

There will be a couple of testimonies from church leaders, church member, talking about the place of the cross in their lives and how they reflect on that. There's going to be readings from the Old Testament and from the New Testament. I'm going to give a very short reflection on Mark 15 for us.

But we've come together, haven't we, to remember Christ's death on the cross. But I think one of the things that you need to say to church and remind church of on Good Friday morning is this is not a funeral, right? Nor is this the repetition of a funeral.

Christ's death on the cross. Christ's death on the cross is his enthronement as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The cross is Christ's victory, not his defeat. We come together to celebrate and not to commiserate.

This is where Christ's death on the cross. This is where Christ is given the name above all names. And that changes everything, doesn't it? Because our service together this morning, it will be serious. There will be opportunity for quiet reflection. But it is not meant to be sad. Because we come together to remember the cross.

[1 : 3 8] Not for the sake of Christ who died, but for our sake. We need to remember the cross for our sake. That in our world of attractive, shiny things, whatever they might be, careers or buildings or families or wealth, there is one thing that shines more brightly in our world than all of those things.

And that is the cross of Jesus Christ. There is nothing more precious than the death of the Lord Jesus Christ for us.

I'm going to read for us a Puritan prayer, which is written about 400 years ago. And he uses the word lustre for shining. It means kind of just radiant and glowing.

And his point, and I'm going to change that word out because it would mean nothing to you, but his point is that the cross radiates, shines out the love of God in our world.

Where do you want to go to know that God loves us? Where will you see God's love in action? You will see it at the cross. So let me open our time together with this prayer. So let's pray together.

[2 : 5 4] Our Father, enlarge our heart. Warm our affections. Open our lips. Supply words that proclaim love shines at Calvary.

There grace removes my burdens and heaps them on your son. Made a transgressor, a curse and sin for me.

There the sword of your justice struck the man, your fellow. There your infinite attributes were magnified and infinite atonement was made.

There infinite punishment was due and infinite punishment was endured. Christ was all anguish that I might be all joy.

Cast off that I might be brought in. Trodden down as an enemy. That I might be welcomed as a friend. Surrendered to hell's worst.

[4 : 0 0] That I might attain heaven's best. Stripped. That I might be clothed. Wounded. That I might be healed. Thirsty.

So that I might drink. Tormented. So I might be comforted. Made ashamed that I might inherit glory. Entered into darkness. That I might have eternal light.

My saviour. Wept that all tears might be wiped away from my eyes. He groaned. That I might have an endless song. He endured all pain.

That I might have unfading health. He bore a thorny crown. That I might have a golden diadem. He bowed his head.

That I might uplift mine. He experienced reproach. That I might receive a welcome. He closed his eyes in death. That I might gaze on his unclouded brightness.

[5 : 0 1] He expired. That I might forever live. Oh father. Oh father. Who spared not your own son. That you might spare me.

All this transfer. Your love designed and accomplished. Help me to adore you. By my lips. And by my life. Oh that my every breath.

Might be praise. My every step. Buoyant with delight. As I see my enemies crushed. Satan. Baffled. Defeated. Destroyed.

Sin. Buried in the ocean of reconciling blood. Hell's gates closed. And heaven's portal open. Go forth. Oh conquering God. And show me the cross.

Mighty to subdue. Comfort. And save. Amen. Amen. One of the astounding things about the cross.

[6 : 0 2] Is that the sort of words used on the cross. Were inspired by the Lord. Generations before. And so David in Psalm 22.

Writes beyond himself. Doesn't he? As he writes the psalm. Which then gets picked up by Christ on the cross. You might want to turn to it. Psalm 22. It's on page 554.

And before we stand and sing together. I am going to read this psalm to us. And you might not be familiar with it. But I'm sure that you will recognize some of the statements here.

As you recognize them being picked up by Christ on the cross. So Psalm 22. For the director of music. To the tune of the dough of the morning.

A psalm of David. My God. My God. Why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me? So far from my cries of anguish?

[6 : 5 7] My God. I cry out by day. But you do not answer. By night. But I find no rest. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One. You are the one Israel praises.

In you our ancestors put their trust. They trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved. In you they trusted and were not put to shame. But I'm a worm.

Not a man. Scorned by everyone. Despised by the people. All who see me mock me. They hurl insults shaking their heads.

He trusts in the Lord they say. Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him since he delights in him. Yet you brought me out of the womb. You made me trust in you.

Even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast on you. From my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me. For trouble is near.

[7 : 53] And there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions that tear their prey. Open their mouths wide against me.

I'm poured out like water. And all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax. It is melted within me. My mouth is dried up like a potsherd. And my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.

You lay me in the dust of death. Dogs surround me. A pack of villains encircles me. They pierce my hands and my feet.

All my bones are on display. People stare and gloat over me. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garments. But you, Lord, do not be far from me.

You are my strength. Come quickly to help me. Deliver me from the sword. My precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lion. Save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

[8 : 53] I will declare your name to my people. In the assembly I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise him. All you descendants of Jacob, honor him.

Revere him, all you descendants of Israel. For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one. He has not hidden his face from him, but has listened to his cry for help.

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly. Before those who fear you, I will fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied.

Those who seek the Lord will praise him. May your hearts live forever. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations will bow down before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations. All the rich of the earth will feast and worship. All who go down to the dust will kneel before him.

[9 : 49] Those who cannot keep themselves alive. Austerity will serve him. Future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim his righteousness. Jesus, declaring it to a people yet unborn.

He has done it. And Andrew's going to come and just give us a word of testimony. Andrew. Good morning, everybody.

My name is Andrew. I'm one of the leaders here at West Kilburn Baptist Church. If anybody would like to follow, what I'm going to share is a quick reflection on my testimony of what Easter means to me.

The page you can find that verse will be 1087. So that's in the Gospel of John, chapter 18. I'm going to share a quick brief reflection of verse 37.

Give you a couple of seconds to find that. Okay. Okay.

[10 : 53] So this is some of my reflections. Steve just asked me to share a testimony or reflection. And throughout my devotion throughout this week, I've been looking at the Gospel of John as well as some other verses.

And coming across this text, it really has spoken to me. We can see Jesus, you know, he's been falsely accused by the high priest and other leaders.

And Pilate, you know, speaks to him. He finds no offense in him. He's ready. He wants to give him back, says he finds no offense, gives it to them for they can judge him according to their law.

But they say that's something they cannot do. Then we see in this verse, Pilate says to him, That just spoke to me.

In terms of once upon a time, the truth is subjective. Many people in their own mind, in their own thoughts, they consider what they believe to be truth.

[12 : 07] And that was also me. But today, this Easter time, as we gather together to reflect and remember what Jesus done and where we are right now, because we see within the text of the Bible that the law and the prophets already proclaimed what would be.

Jesus came and fulfilled the law and the prophets. And that is truth. That is evidence. That's the reason why I personally stand today and everybody else sits and stand here today because they believe in this truth.

That truth is that Jesus really is a king. Pilate said it, but did he really believe it? I don't think so. It would have probably threatened his role and his empire and so forth.

But Jesus is king. He is my king. And that has revolutionized my life. It has revolutionized my life with not just my personal testimony, but it has moved me to know that as I read scripture, I find ultimate truth, which is the same for every single one of us.

And that moves me. If I believe in this truth, there's an act in the way I have to conduct myself. And that leads me to try and seek to live a lifestyle just like Jesus.

[13 : 21] Again, it says that he came for this. Sorry. This is the very reason that I was born. I came into the world to testify to the truth.

Jesus came to reveal the father. He came to reveal who we are, which we're fallen. We're sinful by nature. But the remedy for that is to acknowledge that there has to be a price for our sin, which is death.

Jesus took that sin upon himself. And I stand here today knowing that I'm sustained. Everything is sustained by the word of God's power. That's Hebrews chapter 1, verse 6 or so, I believe.

Everyone in here is sustained by the words of God's power. And that is something to really, really stop and comprehend. How does that affect our life? For me personally, that means everything I do, I have to strive to be that living sacrifice.

Again, Romans chapter 14, verse 9, I believe it tells us whether we live or whether we die, we live or die unto the Lord. So we have the privilege right now, as we do live, as we are standing here, as we worship the Lord together, to know that we can proclaim him as Lord.

[14 : 36] And even those who draw their last breath, unfortunately, if they do not proclaim him as Lord right now, they will see that he is even the Lord of the dead, meaning that he will call them to an account and they will have to give an account.

So with that, with this testimony, this is a day for me where I feel obliged, where I will want to go out into the community and I will want to meet people who do not know this truth.

They live in their subjective truth, which is whatever they've been taught, whatever they've been used to and whatever they're experiencing. So I want to encourage us today that, you know, Jesus is Lord and it is a time of celebration.

It's, you know, as we do sit here, we sit here quietly, but it is a time that we can raise our fifth and say, Hallelujah, he is king. And I know that's her personal testimony, right?

You know, this truth helps us to know, right? With all of our thoughts, all of our brokenness, all of those efforts that we try to achieve, all those things we try to achieve that we don't do it in the way that we'd love to do it.

[15 : 45] The Lord still loves us. He loves us dearly. He loves us so. I'm imperfect. There's a lot of flaws with me, but I know the Lord's love for me. That's something I'm totally confident in.

That's what moves me to follow him and trust in him because I know he accepts me. And I know if my God accepts me, he accepts each and every body you trust in him and believes in him.

And that's the outworking of us demonstrating our faith to our Lord and our King. So, again, it's not a preach. It's just a testimony. It's an encouragement that I want to encourage us with today to know when we leave here today, whether we go back to our family, our friends, wherever we go.

Let us all seek the Lord and ask him to help us to share this truth with people that do not know this truth. Every single one of us in here will probably rub shoulders and come by somebody who does not know this truth.

We have this wonderful treasure. We have the ultimate truth, the best news in the world that people need to know and hear about. And I pray that the Lord would help us, that we can open our mouth and trust in him to communicate this truth, that hopefully they will come to know this truth and that truth will set them through as it's done for me.

[17 : 09] And it's done for many of us in this room. So, praise be to God. Praise be to Jesus. He is Lord. He is King of Kings. All right. And he died for our sin.

The worst things that I've done, he took that upon himself and died for my sins, for your sins. And he continues to forgive us of our past sins, our present sin and our sins that we commit today without acknowledging it all.

So, that's what I really want to encourage everybody with. And I hope the Lord just bless us all to be faithful witnesses and share this truth with people who do not know this truth in the world.

Thank you, Steve. Thanks, Angie. I know everyone's sat there quietly, but they're all saying amen in their hearts, aren't they? Or at least they should be. Hallelujah. Praise God for what he's done for us.

And Jen's going to come and read and speak for us. Thank you. All right. Good morning. We're reading from Isaiah chapter 53, and we're starting at verse 4.

[18 : 14] So, that's page 741. If you've got the church Bibles. Verse 4.

Surely he took up my pain and bore our suffering. Yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him. And by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray.

Each of us have turned to our own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted. Yet he did not open his mouth.

He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before its shears is silent. So he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

[19 : 15] Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgressions of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death.

Though he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. And though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days.

And the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant would justify many.

And he will bear their iniquities. Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great. And he will divide the spoils with the strong. Because he poured out his life unto death.

And he was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgression. Steve asks me as well to just give a testimony of what the cross means to me.

[20 : 29] And I've been coming to this church since I was a toddler. So I've heard about the cross many, many times. And it was only when I was a teenager that the cross actually started to mean something special to me.

So have a look at verse 5. To be honest, all of this chapter has got something special in it. But I've picked up two verses. Verse 5, it says, For he was pierced for our transgression, and he was crushed for our iniquities.

And the punishment that brought us peace was on him. And by his wounds we are healed. And just looking at that, it makes me think of my sin. Not just the things that I say that I do wrong, but the deliberate things that I do wrong, knowing that is against what God wants.

And I thought, because of that, that is why Jesus was on the cross. That's why he died. And I love the fact that it says, by his wounds I'm healed. And because of the punishment that God put on him, I have peace with God.

And that does give great joy when I hear that and when I read that. I think, this is what God has done for me. Because I can't quite understand it. And then verse 10, this is what blows my mind in a way.

[21 : 50] Because it says, Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer. I cannot understand how a father would willingly send his son to die, to take the punishment that others deserve.

And it does blow my mind. And yet, even as I look at that, that does help me as well. But this is what God did. And what I find even more amazing, it wasn't just that.

It was God's father's will to crush him. But God, the son, Jesus, was in on this plan. And he willingly suffered for me. And I get excited about that, that that's what he does.

So when I think of the cross, my emotions are from, I am sad. I'm grieved by my sin. But I'm also grateful for what God has done.

And I then move on from there. Because when I think that it was the father's will and Jesus's will, I then think, wow, I've got security.

[22 : 52] I do not need to worry. I do not need to fret that I will not see God or my sins are not forgiven. I have all that security because of what God has done.

And then, still looking in verse 10, I love the fact that it says, his life was an offering for sin.

To make it make sense to me, for me, having my sins forgiven, it's not that I then go and say to God, oh, I will do this and this and this and this because I want my sins forgiven.

All I have to do is say, Jesus has done it. So that's what I think about. I think about Jesus is my sin offering. So as I'm looking for my emotions, feeling sad for what has happened.

But when I know that I have assurance with God, there's joy. There's great joy coming in. And then when I look to the future and I have that assurance of eternal rest with God, if you know me, you know I like to dance.

[24 : 00] And this is where I would want to dance. I'm not a person that might be holding up my hand or anything like that. But if you're with me and having my quiet time, then I do get up and be dancing around my bedroom.

But the reason why I have all of that is because Jesus has paid the punishment for me. But my main thought when I look at the cross is gratitude.

Gratitude because the Lord has done all this for me. So all I can say, thank you, God. Thank you, Jesus. Thank you, Jen.

Now, what I want us to do now is turn to Mark chapter 15. Mark chapter 15. And we're going to read through the narrative of the cross. So in Mark chapter 15.

Let me tell you a page number when I get there myself. It's page 1022. Page 1022. Mark chapter 15. One of the things I think that's come through so helpfully in Andrew's testimony and Jen's testimony is that there is a delight in the finished work of Jesus.

[25 : 16] We are reading what has been accomplished for us. So let me read this chapter to us. I'm going to give you a couple of reflections and then we'll share the Lord's Supper together. Very early in the morning, the chief priests with the elders, the teachers of the law, and the whole Sanhedrin made their plans.

So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. Are you king of the Jews? Asked Pilate. You have said so, Jesus replied.

The chief priests accused him of many things. So again, Pilate asked him, aren't you going to answer? See how many things they're accusing you of. But still, Jesus made no reply.

Pilate was amazed. Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. A man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder in the uprising.

The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did. Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews? Asked Pilate. Knowing it was out of self-interest, the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.

[26 : 23] But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to get Pilate to release Barabbas instead. What shall I do then with the one you call the king of the Jews? Pilate asked them. Crucify him, they shouted.

Why? What crime has he committed? Asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder. Crucify him. Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them.

He had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace, that is the praetorium, and called together the whole company of soldiers.

They put a purple robe on him and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, Hail, king of the Jews. Again, they struck him on the head with a staff and spat on him.

Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. When they'd mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

[27 : 26] A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country and they forced him to carry the cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull.

Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get. It was nine in the morning when they crucified him and the written notice of the charge against him read, the king of the Jews.

They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, So, you who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself.

In the same way, the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. He saved others, they said, but he can't save himself. Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.

Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him. At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

[28 : 43] And at three in the afternoon, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

When some of those standing near heard this, they said, Listen, he's calling Elijah. Some ran, filled a sponge with wine, being going to put on a staff and offered it to Jesus to drink.

Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down, he said. With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus saw how he died, he said, Surely this man was the son of God. Some women were watching from a distance.

Among them were Mary Madeline, Mary, the mother of James, the younger, and Joseph and Salome. In Galilee, these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

[29 : 46] Well, that is the narrative of the cross of Jesus Christ. Let me just give you a couple of very simple reflections from that passage.

If you've been with us for the last couple of Sundays, we have been considering together the message of the cross. What is it that Jesus was doing on the cross? I think for us, the physical horror of what's going on in these verses jumps out to us, doesn't it?

But when the Bible deals with the cross, actually, it has rather little to say about the physical suffering of Christ and lots to say about what he's achieving and why he's there and what's going on.

And the message of the Bible, both as it anticipates the cross in advance, as it looks forward to it, as we were seeing in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22, and as it looks back at the cross, is to repeat this idea that Jesus dies in our place, facing the punishment that we deserve from a holy God.

You might remember we were talking about it on Sunday, saying that this is the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement. The idea that it is facing the penalty that we deserve in our place to make us one with the Father, to bring us into relationship with him.

[31 : 01] And that is all the way through Mark 15. So notice the substitution as it's drawn out by Mark. Mark 15, the innocent Jesus substitutes in for the guilty Barabbas.

You notice that in verses 6 to 15? Barabbas gets demonstrated to him what is being achieved on the cross as innocent Jesus stands in for guilty Barabbas.

He's then numbered among the sinners, isn't he, as he's crucified with two rebels, one on his left and one on his right in verse 27. And then he's mocked in verse 31 for not saving himself when he saved others.

And of course, why is Jesus not saving himself? It is so that he can save others, right? They thought that the absence of him coming down from the cross and saving himself was an indication that he was powerless.

But actually, it is his great power and his great love, which means he stays on the cross so that he might save you and me. He is there not for himself. He is there for us.

[32 : 04] He is substituting himself in for us. And then you see the wrath of God, don't you? You see that in the physicality of the cross, but even greater than that. You see it in the details here, which are really surprising.

Look at what Jesus cries out in the darkness of verse 33. The darkness, I think, in verse 33 is a symbolic darkness. It's real darkness, but it's symbolic of the wrath and judgment of God.

It's the father turning his face away as we sing in How Deep the Father's Love for Us. And Jesus cries out in a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The darkness and judgment for our sin, the abandonment of God that we deserve is taken by Jesus on the cross. He is there in our place.

He is there facing our punishment. And it's penal, it's facing the penalty. It's substitutionary. But it's atonement as well, isn't it?

[33 : 05] There is at-one-ment, isn't there, here? Notice in verse 38 that the curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. So this is the curtain in the temple which separates people from the presence of God so that they can't get in.

And now it's torn from the top to the bottom. This is an action of God, isn't it? It's not, you know, if you and I go to tear a curtain, we start at the bottom and we tear up. God is tearing it down, isn't it? He, from the top, is opening it up.

And I think we're used to saying something like, oh, well, so he's opened that curtain in the temple so that people can get into the presence of God. But of course we know, theologically, don't we, that we have no inclination to go through that curtain in the temple to get into the presence of God.

Really, the temple curtain is ripped so that God can come out and save his own. On the cross, Jesus faces the penalty that our sins deserve so that God can call us to him, come to us, reach out to us, make himself one with us.

That we might know God, not as a far off distant God, but as our loving heavenly father who calls us his children and loves us. As he bursts out of the Holy of Holies to come and rescue you and me.

[34 : 20] What a great thing. Lord Jesus dies in our place, facing our penalty that we might be at one with God. Lord Jesus dies in our place.