
COMMUNION SUNDAY

PROCLAIMING THE LORD'S DEATH UNTIL HE COMES

A message presented by Pastor Marc Minter
to First Baptist Church of Diana, TX on August 6, 2017

INTRODUCTION

Suffering and death are common to life on earth, but no one wants to think about them, much less experience them. No one in their right mind goes around looking to enter into suffering. And yet, this is exactly what God the Son did. God became a man with the expressed intent of suffering and dying. Furthermore, this suffering and dying Savior is what we celebrate every time we partake of the Lord's Supper (or Communion) as a church body. In this message, we shall consider the counterintuitive nature of the Gospel and the genuine hope provided in Christ's suffering.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you,
that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he
had given thanks, he broke it, and said,

"This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying,

*"This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in
remembrance of me."*

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, ***you proclaim the Lord's
death until he comes.***

THE POINT I'M AIMING AT TODAY:

**We proclaim the Lord's death until He comes, finding hope in His suffering and
in His approaching return.**

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

- (1) EVIL AND SUFFERING IN THE WORLD
- (2) HOPE IN CHRIST'S SUFFERING
- (3) HOPE IN CHRIST'S RETURN
- (4) APPLICATION: SO, WHAT? WHAT WILL YOU DO?

MESSAGE

"...as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (v26).

"You proclaim the Lord's Death." ...Proclaim the Lord's Death... this phrase has captured my focus and heart in such a way as to arrest me over the last several days. **Proclaim**... speak, tell, announce... **the Lord's**... king, master, ruler... **Death?** Tell of the king's death? Announce the master's demise?

What a ridiculous lament?

But that is the most ridiculous part of it! It is not a lament! It is a celebration!

Who celebrates the death of the king?

Answer: The enemies of the king... that's who!

The good king's subjects weep at his death. They mourn the loss of their good master and provider. Those who love the king grieve over the demise of their lord.

What king commands his subjects to devotedly remember his death?

Answer: Maybe a defeated king, who hopes his story will outlive him...

A victorious king, even when he dies, wants stories of his success to be told. *"Tell how I defeated great enemies... Tell how I masterfully provided and ruled... Tell future generations what a grand king I was."*

But the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His subjects to remember **His death**... to remember it **devotedly** and **religiously**... **until He comes**.

This is a curious concept indeed... a curious one and a heavy one. This will require some mindful effort on our part. So, let us think on it a while today.

We proclaim the Lord's death until He comes, finding hope in His suffering and in His approaching return.

(1) EVIL AND SUFFERING IN THE WORLD

- Philosophically, Two Kinds of Evil

- **Natural Evil**

- Natural Evil is suffering caused by non-volitional agents (*agents without intent*).
 - An **illness** known to history as the “**Black Death**” killed more than 1/3 of **Europe’s** population between 1347-1350 (3 years).
 - **Drought** and **Famine** in **Bengal** between 1769-1773 killed at least 10 million people (4 years).
 - An **Earthquake** off the coast of **Japan** in 2011 triggered a Tsunami that flooded up to 6 miles inland, killing between 16,000 and 20,000 people in just a matter of days.
 - Volcanos, storms, illness, famine, and a host of other “natural” disasters produce suffering in our cursed world.
 - ***The storm has no mind of its own, so we refer to it as a “Natural Evil.”***

- **Moral Evil**

- Moral Evil is suffering caused by volitional (i.e. human) agents (*agents with immoral intent*).
 - **Mao’s Communist** regime in **China** murdered more than 45 million people between 1958-1962, and the total death toll is nearing 70 million as records come to light.
 - People were beaten, starved, and murdered because of the communist ambitions of those in power.
 - In what was then known as the **Soviet Union, Stalin’s** communist regime initiated a **Great Purge**, which meant the death of millions of political opponents and common resisters between 1934-1940.
 - Here too, people were beaten, imprisoned, starved and murdered because of the willful actions of other people.

- While Communism in the 20th century proved to be a high watermark for mass examples of Moral Evil, one totalitarian dictator seems to capture our attention above others – Adolf Hitler.
 - Hitler’s Nazi regime was not only socialist and fascist (two close ties with communism), it was also genocidal.
 - Jews, black people, and disabled people were considered “subhuman” and “undesirable.”
- I read the **story** (last week) of ***an old Dutch woman*** who opened her home to Jewish refugees in the 1940s. She helped them in any way she could, and this, of course, was against the explicit laws of the German occupying force in Holland. After a while, the inevitable raid of her home by Nazi soldiers led to her arrest and imprisonment.
 - She tells of her experience with one of the arresting soldiers named “Kapteyn.” She said, “Kapteyn seized me by the elbow and shoved me ahead of him down the remaining five steps and into the rear of the shop. Another soldier in uniform stood guard just inside this door. Kapteyn prodded me through to the front room and pushed me against the wall.

Kapteyn screamed, “*Where are the Jews?*”

She replied, “*There aren’t any Jews here.*”

Then, she said, “*the man struck me hard across the face.*”

Again, he shouted, “*Where do you hide the [food] ration cards?*”

And again, she answered, “*I don’t know what you’re...*”

Before she could finish the lie, she describes, “Kapteyn hit me again. I staggered up against [a large] clock. Before I could recover he slapped me again, then again, and again, stinging blows that jerked my head backward.

In rapid succession, shouts and fists, “*Where are the Jews?*” Another blow. “*Where is your secret room?*”

The old woman wrote, “I tasted blood in my mouth. My head spun, my ears rang—I was losing consciousness. “*Lord Jesus,*” I cried out, “*protect me!*” Kapteyn’s hand stopped in midair. “*If you say that name again I’ll kill you!*”¹

The beating stopped for the moment, but the old Dutch woman was imprisoned and later sent to a concentration camp. Her story of honest and heroic love for Christ and others amid such terrible conditions is captivating.

- I also read the **story** of a young **Jewish boy** (14-years-old) who **survived** a **Nazi concentration camp**. Writing the book as an older man, he told of his arrival to Auschwitz.
 - He and his family (his father, mother, and 10-year-old sister) were herded off a train car, along with hundreds of other Jewish families.
 - The teenaged boy was interrogated by a Jewish inmate who had already been at the Nazi death camp for a long time. The inmate growled at the young man, “*You should have hanged yourselves rather than come here. Didn’t you know what was in store for you here in Auschwitz? You didn’t know? In 1944?*”
 - The boy thought, “True. We didn’t know. Nobody had told us. [The inmate] couldn’t believe his ears.”
 - “Even harsher [the inmate said]: ‘*Over there. Do you see the chimney over there? Do you see it? And the flames, do you see them?*’”
 - “Yes, [the boy thought], we [see] the flames.”
 - “*Over there,*” the inmate continued, “*that’s where they will take you. Over there will be your grave. You still don’t understand? ...Don’t you understand anything? You will be burned! Burned to a cinder! Turned into ashes!*”

¹ Boom, Corrie Ten. *The Hiding Place* (p. 144). Baker Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

- The young man “stood stunned, petrified. Could this be just a nightmare? An unimaginable nightmare?” But it was not a nightmare... It was a reality.²
 - ***This kind of evil has a face and a name, so we refer to it as “Moral Evil.”***
- ***Suffering***
 - Natural Evil and Moral Evil are common in our world.
 - Suffering is a universal experience.
 - We all have... or do... or will suffer from all kinds of things.
 - We get sick; we are injured; we feel the pain of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual suffering.
 - ***So, what hope is there in the Gospel?***

(2) HOPE IN CHRIST’S SUFFERING

“proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (v26).

- Historically, Two Approaches to Christian Life
 - ***Theology of Glory***
 - “Jesus makes my life better.”
 - Veith – “A theology of glory expects total success, finding all the answers, winning all the battles, and living happily ever after. The theology of glory is all about my strength, my power, and my works. A theologian of glory expects his church to be perfect and always to grow. If a theologian of glory gets sick, he expects God to heal him. And if he experiences failure and weakness, if his church has problems and if he is not healed, then he is often utterly confused, questioning the sufficiency of his faith and sometimes questioning the very existence of God”³

² Wiesel, Elie. *Night* (Night Trilogy) (pp. 30-31). Farrar, Straus and Giroux. Kindle Edition.

³ See the full article here: <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/glory-versus-cross/>

- The Theology of Glory sees suffering as avoidable.
 - John 9:1-2 – *“As he [Jesus] passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’”*
 - The students ask their Master, *“How could this poor man have avoided his current suffering?”*
- **Theology of the Cross**
 - “Jesus enters into my suffering, making me victorious in defeat.”
 - Spurgeon (M&E) – *“You have not the making of your own cross... but your cross is prepared and appointed for you by divine love, and you are cheerfully to accept it; you are to take up the cross as your chosen badge and burden, and not to stand [complaining] at it. {Right now} Jesus bids you submit your shoulder to his easy yoke.*

Do not kick at it in [frustration], or trample on it in vain-glory, or fall under it in despair, or run away from it in fear, but take it up like a true follower of Jesus.

Jesus was a cross-bearer; he leads the way in the path of sorrow. Surely you could not desire a better guide! And if he carried a cross, what nobler burden would you desire?

Beloved, the cross is not made of feathers, or lined with velvet, it is heavy and galling to disobedient shoulders; but it is not an iron cross, though your fears have painted it with iron colors, it is a wooden cross, and a man can carry it, for the Man of sorrows tried the load.

Take up your cross, and by the power of the Spirit of God you will soon be so in love with it... Remember that Jesus carried it, and it will smell sweetly; remember that it will soon be followed by the crown, and the thought of the coming weight of glory will greatly lighten the present heaviness of trouble.

The Lord help you to bow your spirit in submission to the divine will... that you may go forth to the day’s cross with the holy and submissive spirit which becomes a follower of the Crucified.”⁴

⁴ Spurgeon, C. H. (1896). *Morning and evening: Daily readings*. London: Passmore & Alabaster.

- These words of Spurgeon’s come from Jesus’ own call:
 - *“Take up the cross, and follow Me”* (Mk. 8:34).

- Proclaiming the Lord’s Death

In Communion (or the Lord’s Supper) we proclaim (at least) 2 things:

1. The Lord’s *Death*

*“proclaim the Lord’s **death** until he comes”* (v26).

- The Lord is ruler of all, but He came to serve
 - *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mk. 10:45).
- The Lord is all-powerful, but He came to suffer
 - *“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised”* (Lk. 9:22).
- The Lord is giver of life, but He came to die
 - Speaking of His death, Jesus said, *“Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour”* (Jn. 12:27).

2. Jesus is the *Lord*

*“proclaim **the Lord’s** death until he comes”* (v26).

- Who is this one who served us, who suffered for us, and who died for us? HE IS THE LORD! And, thus, victorious – even in death.
 - He is *“the heir of all things,”* the one *“through whom also [God] created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...”* (Heb. 1:2-3).

- *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:15-20).*

(3) HOPE IN CHRIST’S RETURN

- Jesus will return, judging all things perfectly, and making all things new
*“proclaim the Lord’s death **until he comes**” (v26).*
 - One day the skies will burst open, and all things shall be seen for what they truly are!
 - The immoral evils of this world will be judged (Rev. 20:11-15).
 - The suffering, great and small, will be ended (Rev. 21:1-5).
 - The King of Glory shall dwell with His people in peace forevermore (Rev. 21:3, 6).

But, until that day... we proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

(4) SO, WHAT? WHAT WILL YOU DO?

- Will you look to Christ as the Lord who died?
 - To the Non-Christian, will you stop thinking that your sin is too great or too small?
 - The Lord has died in the place of sinners like you. This means that you have sinned greatly, and His grace is sufficient to cover all.
 - To the Christian, will you rest afresh today in the Lord who died?

- Will you trust in and follow Christ in midst of suffering?
 - Will you trust that Christ is Lord – even as you suffer?
 - Will you humbly seek to follow your Master, who suffered before you?
 - Will you testify to the other-worldly reality that Christ’s reign is greater than your circumstances?
- Will you eagerly await the return of the Lord?
 - Will you set your eyes upon eternal glory?
 - Will you live as though the things of this world are passing away?

Major Point: We proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes, finding hope in His suffering and in His approaching return.

Partaking of the Lord’s Supper

1 Corinthians 11

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ***“This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”***

Let us partake of the bread together...

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, ***“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”***

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Let us partake of the cup together...

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

A Theology of Glory and a Theology of the Cross by Don Matzat

<http://www.mtio.com/articles/aissar51.htm>

Luther's Theology of the Cross by Carl Trueman

http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/10b.html

The Theology of the Cross by Robert D. Preus (longer & more technical article)

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/ref-rev/08-1/8-1_preus.pdf

Short Summary of "The Hiding Place" by Corrie Ten Boom

<http://www.gradesaver.com/the-hiding-place/study-guide/summary>

Short Summary of "Night" by Elie Wiesel

<http://www.gradesaver.com/night>