

**God Killed Jesus
(Isaiah 53)
Good Friday (CPF), 2018**

I am not sure what you are expecting tonight.

We cannot celebrate resurrection on Sunday if we do not kill Jesus on Friday.

There would be no pretty pastels and brightness representing new life without the dim and dismal colors of death.

But who actually killed Him?

(Acts 2:22-24) "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— 23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. 24 God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."

Jesus though born in Bethlehem, actually grew up in Nazareth, and He spent most of His ministry there.

He demonstrated that He was no ordinary man, because He did miraculous things that no mere human being could ever do.

The things He did, only God Himself could perform.

First, in verse 23b, Peter says, "...you crucified Him..."

Peter is referring to the Jewish people.

The Jews tried to kill Jesus on five separate occasions.
(Luke 4:28-30) (John 5:18 / 7:1 / 8:59 / 10:31-33 / 19:6)

King Herod tried it when Jesus was still a toddler. (Matthew 2:16-18)

But there was a problem; at that time the Jews were forbidden from using the death penalty.

Second, in verse 23c, Peter says, "and killed Him by the hands of sinful men"

It was prophesied 1000 years earlier that Jesus would die at the hands of men who would pierce His hands and feet. (Psalm 22)

This was a prophecy of the crucifixion, a form of death that would not be used in Israel until the Romans took control there in 63, BC.

So to accomplish the plan to kill Jesus and be rid of Him once and for all, they went to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. (John 18:30-31)

By all accounts, even Roman historical ones, Pilate was a jerk.

Jesus would get no help from him, even though Pilate declared Jesus innocent.
(John 18:38 / 19:4, 6)

The Jews cried out for Jesus to be crucified, and spineless Pilate 'washed his hands' of the whole matter and turned him over to be killed.

But there was someone else ultimately responsible for His death.

And it wasn't us...

We have this idea that Jesus' death is all about us, but our sin only earned us death and separation from God and each other.

It did not earn us forgiveness. God was under no obligation to forgive any of us.

Our sins are our fault, committed against a holy and pure God who created everything we know.

And we deserve the consequences for them. The problem is, we can't pay our debt.

We can't live long enough, we can't be good enough, we can't ever give enough to atone for all we have done.

That's why the third Person mentioned in Acts 2:23 is the right answer to the question, "Who killed Jesus?"

"...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God..."

The death of Jesus is not God's Plan B, to remedy a big cosmic "Ooops!" by mankind.

It was God's definite plan to execute Jesus on behalf of sinful people who could never, ever, ever save ourselves.

His foreknowledge determined that Jesus would be the sacrifice for the sins of the people He had not yet created in Genesis 1.

We know this from the fact that, before the foundation of the universe, God wrote the names of those throughout history who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ in His book of life. (Revelation 13:8)

The Jews demanded His execution, the Romans did the killing itself, but behind all this, there stands the righteous, holy, just, merciful, and gracious God.

The death of Jesus puts the beauty of God's justice, grace, and mercy on full display.

So we read in Isaiah 53, verse 4

Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

"...smitten by God..."

(53:5) But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

(53:6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

But lest we forget, Isaiah reminds us in verse 6 that "...the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all..."

(53:7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth!

- like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth!

Why doesn't Jesus complain? Why does He not announce His outrage at being punished for sins He did not commit? (Isaiah 53:10)

In verse 10 we read that it was the will of the Lord to crush Him...

God's determined plan, His will, was for Christ to offer His soul for the guilt of sinful people like us.

But because of God's foreknowledge that His plan would absolutely succeed (Acts 2:23), God would give Christ the promise that His substitutionary death would result in salvation.

(53:10b) The will of the Lord to lay the guilt of our iniquity on Christ would result in "offspring", sinful souls that would be born again, lost people that would be given the right to be called children of God. (John 1:12)

Jesus gives us great hope in the gospel, when He announced that all that the Father gives to Him will come to Him,
that He will not lose a single one who comes
that He will not allow anyone to pluck them out of his hand
that He would raise them up on the last day and give them eternal life. (John 6:36ff; 10:23ff)

In John 6:38, Jesus says He always does the will of God, even if it means being crushed for the sins of many.

- And in Isaiah 53:10, we see it clearly: the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

(53:11) Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Here is prosperity! Here is the good life! It is not achieved by our efforts, by our desires to do better.

The anguish of Jesus on the cross would bring Him the satisfaction of seeing many people counted righteous through His suffering sacrifice on our behalf!

He bears our iniquities and we are accounted righteous before God!

(2 Corinthians 5:21) God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we would become the righteousness of God in Him (Christ).

I left the lights off to symbolize the dreaded darkness that covered the world from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm, ending only when Jesus finally died.

During that time our sins which have separated us from God were credited to Jesus.

In agony He cried out in being forsaken from His Father, knowing the whole time that it was Father's will that He desired to see done. (John 6:38 / Luke 22:42)

He felt that separation in every fiber of His being, and it agonized Him.

And then, in the worst - best moment of human history, the beautifully innocent One died for the very, very guilty ones.

In John 19:38, Jesus knew He had accomplished everything He and Father had determined to do before the foundation of the world.

He announced that His payment fully satisfies the debt of sin we owe God.

"It is finished," He said. And then, Jesus died.

You can't have Resurrection on Sunday without the crucifixion on Friday.

You cannot know new life and rebirth without His death.

You cannot appreciate the most wonderful gift without knowing its terrible cost.

And now...you do...

There is a beautiful word of hope, though, that I wish to leave you with tonight.

In Latin, it is Post Tenebras, Lux...After darkness, light...

We leave this night in darkness, but we rejoice in the light on Sunday.

See you then...