

Chief Service for Good Friday

Bulletin

Audio

'Can you bear the burden that he must bear, or drink of the cup that he must drink?'

Thus asks the Son of Man to the children of Eve.

The officer of Caiaphas strikes the Son, and says *'Is that how you answer the high priest?'* He must be struck, struck down, even by the high priest, for Caiaphas is the representative of all mankind, our mouth before God almighty; and he must strike down this Jesus, in the name of God, for this man has become the evil of all humanity.

Did you not know that when you were baptized, your sins were not merely washed away? They were transferred; the weight of your transgression was removed from your back, but put onto His. Every Christian baptism, then, and now, and unto the end of age, is a transference of our hate from us onto Him, the Son of Man, who truly becomes the Son of Man, because *He has born our sins.*

His back is scourged. Blood drips from it onto the pavement. Again and again He is lashed. For His back bears the sin of the world. *Through his blood, we have redemption through the forgiveness of sin.* Yet this blood must be shed. Shed upon cold stone, *that he become a man of sorrows.*

Take Him, you who have cast your wickedness upon Him. Take Him, and bind unto Him His cross. Command Him to carry it, to carry it to the rock of the skull, for we are His master, and He is but *a suffering servant.*

Look upon the crown of thorns we thrust upon Him, see the crimson liquor drip into His eye. It reddens, and it weeps. The same eye that looked upon Adam in his rebellion, and asked *'Where are you?'* The same eye that saw the tomb of Lazarus, and cried. The same eyes that looked up to heaven and begged the Father *'Take*

this cup from me.' But the cup cannot be taken from Him. He must drink it, down to the dregs, because you, dear Christian, were baptized.

Look upon the crown, the crown of the only Son of God, the crown of agony, and of Passion. Look upon the coronation of the *king of the Jews*, and see the fate that you deserved.

It is written in the Revelation to Saint John that the twenty-four elders of man shall cast their diadems before the Lord. Did you think these were diadems of gold? No, they cast before the Christ the only crown He would ever wear, saying, *'You, O Lord, are worthy to receive glory.'* For the Lord Himself has spoken it, *'Now is the Son of Man to be glorified.'*

But enough of His crown. The Son of Man must die, for He has taken on the sin of world, *and become sin for us.*

He takes up His cross, though none *take up their cross and follow him*, for we have cried out *'crucify him.'*

The servant obeys, and lifting up His cross, He ascends the mount of Golgotha, the place known as 'the skull', for there, it is thought, the skeleton of Adam was hidden. To where the first man died, now shall the Everlasting Man be murdered. Just outside the walls of the Holy City; *to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, in the midst of Jerusalem.*

A sign is made to be put upon the instrument of His torture, written in Aramaic and Latin and in Greek, that all the world may know their guilt in killing the Son, and that they may know that the guilt of all shall be killed in the Son. You may repent of what you have done to the Christ, but even the heathen tells you *'what is written is what is written.'*

His cross is lifted up, and His torn body upon it, showering down blood, *for in the blood is life.* Soldiers and peasants alike mock the Son of Man, for all their sins lay upon Him, and all their sin deserves mockery. Guards divide His garments, for the cloth of righteousness must be granted to all.

A lance is thrust into His side. And you, who look upon the wreck of His body, the body that bore your shame, your guilt, your iniquity; if you have any remorse at all, you will say with the centurion, *'Truly, this was the Son of God.'*

But the Christ gives up his spirit, and thinks only: *'Now the last enemy to be abolished is death.'*

'And he descended into hell.'

Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Texts: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42.