



April 10, 2020

SONG OF PREPARATION – “Lamb of God” by Darlene Baz

<https://youtu.be/2QGNUDsQ6fl>
(Ctrl/click to go to link)

For video version of the meditation go to <https://messiahmech.com/messiah-digital/>

“When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” - A Litany

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross:

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world:

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God
All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Christ humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross:

See, from His head, His hands, His feet
Sorrow and love flow mingled down
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

And He said to all, “If any would come after me, let them deny themselves and

take up their cross and follow me”:

Were the whole realm of nature mine
That were a tribute far too small
Love so amazing, so divine
Demands my soul, my life, my all!

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Let us pray together.

C: Almighty God, we ask you to look with mercy upon your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and given over to the hands of sinners and suffer death on a cross. As You carried our sins in your own body on the tree so that we might have life, may we and all who remember this day find new life in you now and in the world to come, where you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen

MEDITATION: “THE PLACE CALLED GOLGOTHA” -

PASTOR CARBAUGH

“And when they came to the place called Golgotha...”

One of the interesting images in scripture is that of mountains. Throughout scripture, we learn that mountains were those locations where God spoke to people. They were the special sites where the human and the divine encountered one another most directly, where God invited a select group of followers so the Word of God could be revealed.

I mention this because when we think of where Jesus was crucified, it is often thought of in terms of a mountain or a hill - Mount Calvary. But in truth, never in the Bible is Golgotha called a mountain or a hill. In the accurate translations, it says: “And they came to the PLACE; they came to the PLACE. Now, that may not seem very important, but let’s take a moment to consider what happens at ‘the place’ in the Gospels.

In the 1st chapter of Mark, we read: “And in the morning, a great while before day, Jesus rose and went out to a lonely place, and there He prayed.” So Jesus is off to Himself at this place. But then see what happens. Uninvited, Simon and those who were with him found Jesus and said: “Everyone is searching for you.”

Or, there is the 6th chapter of Luke. Jesus had been praying up in the hills where He chose His twelve apostles. After that, He came down with them and ‘stood

on a level place', with a great crowd of disciples and a great multitude of people - and He taught and healed them.

Or, the 9th chapter, where Jesus had taken His disciples for some time alone. But great crowds followed, uninvited, and Jesus welcomed them - teaching and healing. As the day wore on, they became concerned about food. The twelve said to Jesus: "Send them away to lodge and get provisions for we are here in a 'lonely place'. And Jesus goes on to feed the 5,000 with plenty left over.

In the 22nd chapter, Jesus comes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. The Garden is at the foot of the Mount of Olives. It says: "When He comes to the 'place'". At that place, Judas and a crowd comes, uninvited, to arrest Jesus. Then there is the 23rd chapter: "And when they came to the 'place', which is called the skull, there they crucified Him, and the criminals."

To me, that is one of the messages of Good Friday - not that we must climb a mountain to be with God, but that God has come down the mountain to the 'places' where we live. Jesus' death and victory did not occur in the holiest temple or on the highest mountain, but 'at the place'. And what are the places of our lives? They are the places where we are hurting - physically, mentally, emotionally; They are the places where we are struggling for meaning in our lives; They are the places where we carry guilt that needs forgiveness; they are the places where we are hungry; they are the places of fear and uncertainty and death. You know the places of your life; we all know the places.

The 'good' of Good Friday is that it is 'at the place' where Jesus meets us - not where we ought to be, but where we are. It is at those places where sometimes we wish we weren't, where parts of life are often uninvited and unplanned and unwanted. That's the place where Jesus is to preach and teach and heal and feed and, yes, even to die - at the place. It is our Christian faith and hope that in all of these places of darkness, Jesus can and will bring forth, not just a little more light - but a new and glorious day indeed!

Some of you may remember the old TV show - All in the Family. In one episode, Edith Bunker was working in a home for the elderly. She was sitting with an elderly woman who was dying. The lady told Edith that she had lived a good life and was ready to die. After the lady's death, the relatives were angry because no emergency measures were taken to sustain her life. When Edith was questioned as to why she didn't do anything, she answered: "I just did what she asked me to do. Hold her hand and not let go."

Good Friday reminds us that God comes to the places where we are, because that is where God meets our needs - and gives us hope. Sometimes, all the time, we need someone to be in those places with us. Sometimes, all the time, we need someone to hold our hand, hold our lives, and not let go. Sometimes, all the time, we need someone who can begin to turn darkness into light - or at

least who can make our darkness bearable. God is that Someone. God is that Someone who loves us, who died for us, AT THE PLACE called Golgotha.

SEVEN LAST WORDS OF CHRIST

THE FIRST WORD

“So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us’; and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots to divide his clothing.” (Luke 23: 24-34)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You were able to offer what is often difficult for us to offer. Even in the midst of persecution, suffering and crucifixion you were able to look with concern on those who were doing all of that to you, and ask that they be forgiven. You gave them life even as Your life was being taken away. You offer that forgiveness to us, even when what we are doing is hurting You. Give us courage and strength to forgive those who would take life away from us, and help us to seek your forgiveness throughout our life’s journey. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

THE SECOND WORD

“And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!” The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying,

“Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”. (Luke 23: 35-43)

Prayer: Remember us, O God, according to your loving kindness. Remember us, O God, when your kingdom comes fully in power. You, who promised paradise to the repentant thief, have mercy on us as we cry out to you - and when our end finally comes, keep us eternally with you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE THIRD WORD

“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

**“They divided my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.”**

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.” (John 19: 23-27)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, even in your darkest time, you had compassion on your family - calling them to care for one another. We are Your family, O Lord. Teach us to care for one another as you have cared for us. Help us to stand together, especially in difficult times. Help us to see your presence in our love for one another. As you love us, encourage us to love one another, not because it is easy to do, but because you have called us to do it, in Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

THE FOURTH WORD

“Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!” In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also

taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15: 29-34)

Prayer: Blessed Jesus, you experienced the pain of abandonment on the cross. Be with us when we feel forsaken and alone - and give us grace to know that You are ever with us. Grant us the courage to walk in the way of the cross, and find it to be the way of life and peace. Amen.

THE FIFTH WORD

"After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth." (John 19: 28-29)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you promised that all who drink of you shall never thirst. On the cross, you knew our need, you experienced our thirst, you shared in our suffering. Help us to be honest about our need for you so we can turn to you - the fountain of living water. May we also be aware of the thirst of others, and in your power offer them a cup of living water for their journey. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

THE SIXTH WORD

"When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced." (John 19: 30-37)

Prayer: Almighty God, we ask you to look with mercy on your family, for whom our Lord Jesus was willing to be betrayed and suffer death on the cross. As your obedient Son perfectly accomplished your will, make us open to do your will that we may not leave our tasks unfinished, but may find our lives completed and fulfilled in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE SEVENTH WORD

“It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.” (Luke 23: 44-49)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when life is depleted and we don't know what else to do, when hope seems lost and we are at life's end, give us the grace to commend ourselves to you. Help us to place our lives into your loving arms, fully believing that we are safe and redeemed. Give us the faith that believes you can transform death into life, that all is not lost because of you. Redeem our lives from the grave, O God, and fill us once again with the power of new life. Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**C: *Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.***

SONG FOR REFLECTION – “O Sacred Head Now Wounded” By Fernando Ortega

<https://youtu.be/UgkVTtT-0xg>
(Ctrl/click to go to link)