

Palm Sunday/Sunday of the Passion
Year of the Lord 2019
Luke 23

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”
“Let me see my Savior’s face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to
Thee!”**

Luke 23:1–56So Pilate decided that their demand should be granted. He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, for whom they asked, but he delivered Jesus over to their will. And as they led him away, they seized one Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and laid on him the cross, to carry it behind Jesus. And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. But turning to them Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold, the days are 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 these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

In the Name of Jesus:

The Lord calls out to us ‘Stop crying—for ME!’ and then ‘Go on and cry—for yourselves!’ And with both commands, there is no way He is playing ‘Moses’ and laying down the Law. ‘But TURNING toward them Jesus said’ those words. Saint Luke favors that phrase!

When one from OUTSIDE ISRAEL made a confession of faith, Jesus ‘turned toward’ the Jewish crowd following, to save them. ‘Not even in Israel have I found such faith.’

And when Simon the Pharisee sat judging the sinful woman weeping on Jesus’ feet, kissing them and drying His feet with her hair, Jesus ‘turned toward Simon’ and spoke—to save even the

Pharisee, to teach Simon to weep. Smile! My dear ones! There's hope even for US!

And then: Simon Peter, Jesus' BFF, 'went out and wept bitterly' after... After he had denied Jesus three times? No.... After Simon heard the rooster crow a second time? No...

Hear the Holy Gospel! Hear and be glad and weep for yourselves and for your children! Learn from our dear mother, the Church, who sings to us in the liturgy to make our whole life one endless prayer and song and hymn: 'You are the Lord! And YOUR place is to have mercy on those who have no help and no strength of our OWN! Lord, have mercy on US!!!! And our children.'

⁵⁹ And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean." ⁶⁰ But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹ **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.** And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. ¹

After all his boasts of loyalty, faith, support, love, the only SIMON who bore the disciple's cross was one who was FORCED to do it! A NEW character, just coming in from the field. And not his OWN cross—but the cross of Jesus.

My dear ones: JESUS...IS...NOT...LIKE...US! Though that's how He was treated: from conception to birth to suffering to burial. Wholly one of us—and yet, not one of us at all! I can prove it!

I've read these verses for years, about Jesus telling the mourning women to weep for themselves, for their children; about men calling out for the mountains and hills to cover them, in the days to come. And, because I am still LOADED with the Old Adam, I skipped merrily past all of that, just ASSUMING that Jesus is ACTING like me and you and the rest of the world. 'Oh, I am

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 22:59–62). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

getting it good TODAY! But after this, Y'ALL had better WATCH OUT! What do you think Y'ALL are gonna get?!

Right. On His way to That Place where THIS was settled once and for certain and for good:

⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" ⁴⁸ And all the crowds that had assembled for this spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, returned home beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who had followed him from Galilee stood at a distance watching these things. ²

Ohhh..., my dear ones! He's/not/like/us! WE are ready for a judgment of doom to fall on those who dare even step on our TOES! WE even get worked about people we will never MEET, thanks to evil TV and evil PHONE and evil social media and evil US! People can make us cry out for a day of swift vengeance on those who may only POTENTIALLY harm us, long-distance!

Just one more thing for the One Who will return to judge the living and the dead—one more thing, in the heap, for Him to pardon without end; and that means life without end, His pardon.

Jesus was not SCARING those women. He was SAVING them! It's...ALL...HE...KNOWS! Even MOSES knew about the One Who would supplant Him, replace the Old and the Law and the threat of DEATH with the New and the Gospel and forgiveness, life and salvation!

The LORD will vindicate his people. and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free. Then he will say, "Where are their gods, the rock in which they took refuge, who ate the fat of their

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 23:44–49). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offering? Let them rise up and help you; let them be your protection!” “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”

‘Into your hands, I commit my Spirit!’ We...MOUTH...those words, my dear ones. And we are free to do it; and the Spirit of Jesus forms our mouths around those words and He approves of them. But the CONFIDENCE of that prayer rests in this: our King, our Christ, our Lord, our Savior, our Brother, prayed them and fell into the hands of the Unseen God Dead.

And if the shred of conscience left in us does not weep at that; the Lord does not give up! He calls out to us: ‘Ummm...howzabout some tears? Now would be a good time. Your tears are about the only thing that comes FROM Y’ALL that I can use to save you!’

Our tears, His Body and His Blood; and this SNACK becomes a SUPPER, at which the angels of God bow in reverence.

OUR mourning—oh! And Jesus doesn’t even fuss if our mourning must be TAUGHT, and URGED, even COMMANDED! HE wept over Jerusalem; even the loss of the OLD, the Created, all warped by sin, still grieves our good God. And so the Holy Spirit comforts you and me even—EVEN, ALWAYS, FULL-TIME!—as we cry tears borne of idolatry, when we lose those things that are doomed before we get them. What kind of love is this?

We have three young men who plan to present themselves as candidates for eating and drinking the Lord’s Body and Blood; to become part of the ‘many’ for whom His Blood was shed. They have been baptized; and they have been taught; and I have tried my best, as your servant, to convince them that there’s good reason for them to RUN AWAY FROM US TODAY! That the rest of us have a hard time seeing how these precious, baptized children of God should join with those who need Christ as if He is being bloodied again in our presence, to cover our boasts and failures and our OWN forced cross-bearing.

Should we commune with them? Don't look in there, or in here.
Hear!

But turning to them Jesus said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children...."

I remember as a young man, looking for a mountain to cover me, or even a hill. I had offended my father, stabbed him in the heart. Y'all may say what I say; but I mean it when I say that my father hung the moon up in the sky. How did I find it in me to offend THAT man?! Impressive!

Until I learned years later to mourn even more my inability to show grace and forgiveness and acceptance and pardon, like that miserable old sinner, my Dad. I remember spying on things the angels dare not view; watching him, waiting in line to go to communion; wringing one hand with the other. What could be so wrong with the one who made life livable?

It's only taken me 53 years to begin to learn. Dad wasn't centered on his sins; he was hearing his Lord; no matter what he or others judged about him, he was weeping for himself, and teaching his most unworthy child to weep too, if that will ever be possible. 'All things are possible with God!'

So, we welcome three more young, holy, pure and sinless, baptized, clean and loved by God—yet, our children. What WE offer God is best distilled to tears. He ASKS for them!

He must figure that clears the way, somehow, for us to receive all He is and all He gave, and gives, and will give, until that Day, when God, our Father, wipes away every tear from our eyes in the Name of Jesus. Amen.