

GOOD FRIDAY

April 14 2017

Pastor Devin Kerns

At Christ's birth angels were in attendance.
During His great temptation in the wilderness,
 angels attend to Him there as well.
Angels came to comfort Him while He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

But while on the cross,
 no angels were present.
Though these powerful, shining spirits
 could have swooped in to work a mighty rescue in a mere moment—

God the Father looks down upon this Man of Sorrows, Grief, and Death,
 and says to the angels: "Stand down. Do not help Him."

Even God the Father turns away—
 and our Lord eventually says, "It is finished."

What is finished? It's a long answer...

In the beginning God created all things good—He created them full of life,
 but then, breaking through God's goodness comes the Devil,
 with sin on his tail and death on his tongue.
What results is the fall of Adam and Eve...
Thus, at the outset
 is this great and epic war between life and death,
 between sin and righteousness,
 between Jesus and the Devil—
 That's how it begins...
 Yet, Eve is told, "Your seed shall crush his head."

And through the ages the battle rages on;
 this great battle between light and dark.
There's Cain and Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...
Then there are the children of Israel, called out of Egypt with
 Lamb's blood on their doorposts and unleavened bread in their mouths.

In the wilderness with Moses, God's people finally make it to the Promised Land,
with Judges who fight, prophets who preach and priests who make sacrifices.

There's David, Solomon and the Kings.
 Always fighting against the Devil,
 always waiting and hoping for the great Conqueror,
 the Promised One to come—Hosanna—Save Us Now.

Then there's Mary... and a Baby,
 Angels and shepherds,
 The Messiah has come.
 But all is not well. There's more fighting still, the fieriest yet.

You have John the Baptist, the wilderness, the demons the disciples...
 and the crowds who demand, "Show us a sign!"
 Which soon turns to, "Crucify Him."

There are the Pharisees, then Judas, Annas and Caiaphas,
 Pilate and Herod and the soldiers.

There's the whip,
 the cross,
 the nails,
 the crown of thorns,
 the agony...

Three and a half years of preaching.
 Two years of rejection.
 Twenty hours of torture.
 Six hours of hanging,
 gaspng,
 suffering.

Three of those hours are spent in darkness,
 of being beaten by heaven and hell and everyone in between.
 And now, finally: "It is finished."

His work is complete.
 He bore our grief's and carried our sorrows.
 He was wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities.

The atonement is finally made—the sacrifice complete.
 It was finished, but it wasn't over.

For you see a single soldier now marched towards the Lamb of God to break His legs.

Now, why does that matter?

After all that's taken place, why does it matter?

Because according to God's own word,
 the only Passover Lamb acceptable to Him
 is a lamb without a single broken bone.
 It's finished, but it's not over.

The soldier comes and breaks the legs of the first man.
 Jesus was next.
 Would our Passover Lamb have its legs broken
 and thus be rendered an unacceptable sacrifice?

The soldier moves toward Jesus,
 but passing by, he breaks the legs of the other man.
 Two down, one to go.

The Jews asked for their legs to be broken—so as to hasten death—and suffering.
 For at sundown—the high holy day of the Passover would begin.

Could it be that they had heard the Baptist say,
 "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?"
 Could it be that all of their lives they had eaten the Passover lamb,
 careful not to break a single bone?
 Could it be,
 that the one way to make sure Jesus' death would not be an acceptable sacrifice
 are that His legs are broken.
 Or does all that sound too devilishly devious...
 Too satanically smart?
 That's exactly what it sounds like.

The battle that has raged from the beginning all comes down to one final blow.
 But the hammer never swings. Bones are never broken.

Is it because the soldier suddenly has compassion—
 on a body that been tortured for hours?

Is it because the soldier knew for certain Jesus was already dead?

No, the spear thrust in His side puts an end to both of those theories.

Why is the hammer never swung?

There is only one reason.

Because the Word of God cannot be broken.

These things took place that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

What are those Scriptures?

“Not one of His bones will be broken.”

And another,

“They will look upon Him whom they have pierced.”

For centuries upon centuries those words stood declaring exactly that would happen that Friday afternoon. And when that spear was thrust cruelly into Jesus' side, it might just have well been thrust right through Satan's heart. Jesus' death was the acceptable sacrifice.

So, the battle waged by God against the Devil in the garden,

the battle for poor miserable sinners,

the battle for your life and salvation,

that is what is finished.

It's over—Jesus crushes the Devil

by being destroyed and crushed Himself,

all for you.

In the Holy Name of Jesus, Amen.

TURN OUT LIGHT