

Good Friday • April 14, 2017
St. John's Lutheran Church, Alexandria, VA
Rev. Braun Campbell
John 19:17-30

“At the Crossroads: Death”

Who said you were worth it?

Our world isn't perfect. Things aren't the way they should be. Look around and see. See hunger and poverty. See disasters. See man's inhumanity to man. See death.

You and I aren't perfect, either. We don't keep our promises. We get angry, speaking words and taking actions that hurt people. We get wrapped up in ourselves and fail to care for others.

But is our world so broken, are we so imperfect, that someone should have to die because of it? Yes! You should have to die. I should have to die. Everyone who bears responsibility for that brokenness should have to die. It's that bad. The end of all our brokenness is death.

The end of all our brokenness is death. It has to be that way. As God tells us, the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23a), what we have all earned. God is just, and divine justice requires that the guilty get what's coming to them. So someone – everyone – should have to die.

Are you so loved that someone should willingly die for you? Yes! Look to the cross of Jesus and see that God loved you in this way: He sent His Son to take your place – in life and in death. God steps in and changes the outcome. That's what He does.

Jesus willingly gives himself over to receive the wages you earned. He goes to suffering and death to bear the full penalty for your sin. Jesus carries it all to the cross. He undergoes separation from his Father and your Father as he takes your brokenness and imperfection away from God and away from you. There on the cross, Jesus completes his work: “It is finished” (John 19:30). The end of all our brokenness is death. So now you can be with God.

Jesus went to the crossroads of death to bring you life. In Baptism, God connects you and me to Jesus' death and puts our sin on the cross. In its place, He gives restored life with Him, the inheritance of the Son in his Father's household. You have life in Christ – now – life which does not end with death.

Death is no longer a mystery for the Christian, because Jesus didn't stay dead. Death, that separation of body and soul that was not part of God's original design for His creatures, will not last. The same Jesus who died to break the power of sin and death is the same one who will call his people out from death into resurrected life. You can look ahead in faith to the day of resurrection and know that death has been swallowed up with Jesus' victory for you. The price has been paid. The battle has been won.

Who said you were worth it? On this Good Friday, look to the cross, and see.

Amen.