

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Day:-

Some brief thoughts for meditation! As preparation read carefully Isaiah chapter 53, a prophecy on the “Servant of the Lord” (Isaiah 52, verses 13 - 15)

Maundy Thursday:-

Our Lord Jesus Christ was *“a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief”* (Isaiah 53, verse 3).

Sometimes in our thinking on the events of that first Maundy Thursday evening we concentrate on the meal itself, or the “foot washing”. Very important in themselves, however they should not be allowed to eclipse the agony suffered by our Redeemer in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Read Mark, chapter 14, verses 32 – 42. It was here that the spiritual battle was fought and won!

Three times Jesus pleads with the Father - *“Abba, Father”*. He said, *“everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.”* The sorrow and anguish felt by our Saviour was not just a very human fear of death but a knowledge that he would be cut off from his heavenly Father by the weight of sin that he was to bear. The agony which would find voice on the cross in the words *“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”* (Mark 15, verse 34, echoing Psalm 22, verse 1).

Good Friday:-

Read quietly to yourself John chapter 18, verse 28 to chapter 19, verse 42.

Remember that these things all happened between sunrise and sunset on that first Good Friday. Jesus had already been condemned by the Jewish Sanhedrin late on the Thursday evening, (Matthew chapter 26, verse 57 – chapter 27, verse 2). Now he is brought before the Roman governor who alone could pronounce the death sentence (John 18, verse 31). Pilate was very much a politician! Wanting to placate the vocal Jewish ringleaders yet knowing that the sentence they asked for was unjust. He realised that the religious leaders were envious of Jesus (Mark 15, verse 10). Pilate also received a letter from his wife, warning him against getting involved (Matthew 27, verse 19). However under the pressure of being “politically correct” and holding his position of authority directly from Rome, he passed the death sentence (John 19, verses 12 – 16). The religious leaders of the time would rather have an earthly ruler with influence than the Lord of Life. The cry *“We have no king but Caesar”* was a final denial of their allegiance to the Lord God of Israel.

So the Lord of life was led out to die bearing his own cross. All the “Words from the Cross” need time for contemplation. Of these the last loud cry *“It is finished”* (John 19, verse 30) is perhaps the most important for believers. It is the same Greek word (*tetelestai*) as that which is translated *“completed”* in verse 28. It is a cry of triumph used by athletes as they cross the finishing line! At that moment the Saviour had completed his work of redemption. The blood was shed, the sacrificial lamb had been offered, the price of your salvation and mine was paid! The veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the access to the Most Holy Place, the throne of the Most High was open to all who believe. (Matthew 27, verses 50 – 51 and Hebrews 4, verses 14 - 16)

Easter Day:- Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

Knowing what we know, what other outcome could there be? The Lord of Life, the One through whom all things were made, could not be restrained by death and the grave. *“This Jesus God raised up exalting him to His right hand on high where he ever lives to make intercession for us.”* (Acts 2, verses 32 – 33 and Hebrews 10, verses 19 – 22). What then should be our response?

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small.*

*Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

Isaac Watts 1707