

Good Friday, April 10, 2020, Liturgical Year “A”

Saint Andrew’s Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+, Rector

Scripture: John 19:1-16a

“Here is the Man!”

If you will notice that our church has been made barren. The Altar has been stripped and a crown of thorns is behind me on the Altar. There are no hangings, no draperies, I have no lights on in the church. This is a very solemn day.

The three very important readings touched me. The first is Genesis chapter 22. We are given a type here of a young boy, an only son, who is given by his father to travel with him three days. They travel to a mountain that God showed Abraham. They left servants, and Abraham’s faith is shown by saying to the servants “you wait here, we will go and worship – and we will return to you.” He knew in his heart of hearts that God was not going to break His promise that this son, Isaac, was going to be the one whose descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. Somehow he knew that God was going to do something, and so Abraham would be faithful.

And so he put the wood on his son’s back. Another Son, many, many years later, because His Father asked Him to, would allow the wood to be put on His back – as He carried it up a portion of the same mountain. You see, the place where Abraham took Isaac would one day become the Temple Mount, and on the side of that mountain in Jerusalem, Jesus carried His cross. He went willingly, got upon the wood – but there was no substitute, no ram in the thicket to take Jesus’ place. Jesus was our substitute – taking our place. It just gives me the chills to think that that is how much the Son of God, God the Father and the Holy Spirit love us – and that sacrifice took place on our behalf.

The second reading is Psalm 22. Back in the first century, there were no scrolls for people to carry around, there were no iPhones where you could go to an app of the Bible to read Scriptures, there was no Bible that you could carry with you. So they memorized; people memorized the first verse of Scriptures, and a Rabbi would just have to say the first verse and people would know what was taking place. A Rabbi was nailed to the cross – and He cried out the first verse of Psalm 22. He said, “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me!*” In other words, He was saying, what you see now – what is taking place in front of you – besides the fact that my clothes are being separated, being divided – and casting lots for them – I am here – My hands and my feet are pierced. Now I don’t know about you – but if I were present at that and I heard that being said – I would fall on my face and like Thomas say, “my Lord and, my God!”

It is tremendously powerful for us to know that God has everything planned for us.

And then there is the Passion according to John. Reading that and hearing those words really takes me back to the beginning to the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John begins with creation, and verse 14 says: “*And the Word became flesh and lived among us.*” The one who was with God, the one who was God, alongside the Father, reflecting His character and love – became a human being. Now remember – on the sixth day of creation – mankind was made.

We find ourselves on a Friday. What day of the week in the Jewish calendar and week – is Friday? It is the day before Shabbat, the Sabbath, the sixth day of the week.

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I want you to remember the words of Pontius Pilate as he pointed to the Man who had been beaten to within an inch of His life – he then says those haunting words about this Man with a crown of thorns and a purple robe – he pointed to Him and said - “*Here is the man!*” My friends, here is the true image of the true God. Here is the one who has brought God’s wisdom into the world – the word made flesh – the true embodiment of the living God – the one who has made the invisible visible.

Jesus behaves as the earthly reflection of God in the world – a world filled with rebellion to God. “*Here is the man!*” These words reverberate throughout all of John 19 as Jesus goes to the cross. The true reflection of God – the eternal Word – took our flesh – and our punishment. “*Here is the man*” – a living, loving, bruised and bleeding God, Himself – hearing those that He loves – chanting for His death.

God Himself! I immediately go back to Genesis 22 when the obedient Isaac looks at his father and says “*father, we have the fire and the knife, but where is the lamb?*” Abraham says, “*my son, God Himself will provide the lamb.*” God Himself!

“*Here is the Man!*” Here is Your King!