

Hosea 6:1–6
Good Friday (Tre Ore)
Kaiserslautern Ev. Luth. Ch.
March 29, 2024

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dearly bought hearers by the blood of Jesus Christ,

Good Friday is about repentance. We look upon Jesus Christ, upon His bitter sufferings and death, and there we see the result of our sin. For our sins Jesus was shamefully treated, spit upon, tortured, scourged, whipped, beaten, nailed to the cross, and murdered. When we see our savior suffering, we learn to recognize our sin for the horror that it truly is.

Jesus bore our sins in His body on the tree, as prophesied throughout the Old Testament. In the first reading in the Tre Ore service, from the Prophet Hosea in ch. 6, we hear Jesus speaking in place of all sinners: “Come, let us return to the LORD; for He has torn us, that He may heal us, He has struck us down, and He will bind us up.” The LORD makes alive by killing. Like a good father, he makes things unpleasant that we might learn the truth. He shows us our weaknesses that we might gain strength from Him. He diagnoses our sins that we might learn to recognize the cure that comes from Him alone. We repent of our sins because we know the LORD has our ultimate good in mind.

“After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live before Him.” Here, Jesus speaks directly about His death and resurrection. After two days, God the Father will revive Him. After two days, He will revive us, that is, after two days He will make us alive again. That means death for two days, but on the third day resurrection. Jesus died and was buried in the tomb, where He rested in death until Easter Sunday. But the LORD raised Him up and gave Him new life, and He in turn imparts that new life to you. Weeping may endure for a night or two, but joy comes in the morning (Ps 30:5). That’s how it was for Jesus and that’s how God continues working in your life, too. After the storm comes sunshine.

So “Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD; His going out is sure as the dawn, He will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that enter the earth.” The LORD’s dealings with us lead us to seek Him more and more; to know Him more and more. We know He is sure and certain. As the dawn comes after the night of deep darkness, so does the LORD always show Himself after a time of hiding. As the spring rains come year after year, so does the LORD continually cleanse us with the springs of living water. His coming is certain. Come to Jesus for this living water, believe in Him, and out of your heart will flow rivers of living water.

“What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? What shall I do with you, O Christians?” The Lord’s love is like the spring rain that consistently waters the earth. Your love is like a morning cloud, here right now and gone in a few hours. Your love is like the dew that goes away the moment the sun strikes it. Compared to the LORD’s love, everything we are and have is fleeting.

“Therefore,” says the LORD, “I have hewn them by the prophets.” The LORD has crushed our stony hearts and given us a heart of flesh. He has slain us by the words of His mouth, with the Word of Law to condemn us. But then He has healed our wounds with the sweet medicine of the Gospel. His judgment goes forth as the light. It covers everything: all people at

all times and places. His judgment even enters the heart and sees the motives for everything you say and do. Whereas man can only see outward actions, God can and does see what's going on inside the heart.

“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.” Jesus cites this passage in Matthew 9 when He calls Matthew, the tax collector, to be one of His disciples. Jesus ate with Matthew's friends, with tax collectors and sinners. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked the disciples: “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard this, He said: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Sin is a disease, a hereditary disease inherited from Adam. You are sick, but the Great Physician comes to you with the medicine of immortality. The LORD works through the prophets to diagnose your sin so that He can give you the proper remedy, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is first and foremost a God of mercy. Come, let us return to the LORD; for He has torn us, that He may heal us, He has struck us down, and He will bind us up.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.