



[Rev. Steven S. Billings](#)

Sermon for Good Friday

April 18, 2025

Dreadful Silence

Isaiah 53:9

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

It was on a particular day that the earth fell into a dreadful silence. It was a day full of contrasts – a day characterized by time, a day set and ordained since the foundation of the world. The passion of Christ, the death of God on the cross, had been foretold in the Garden of Eden after Satan had his way with God's good creation.

"Because you have done this," God said to Satan, "you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel"(Genesis 3:15). The Seed of the woman shall crush the head of the serpent.

Why did the Creator see fit to send His Son into this world in order to bear our flesh? Why was God in this world, having been made a man? Why must salvation be accomplished in such a difficult way? Why couldn't God simply will us all to be forgiven? Couldn't He simply snap His fingers and spare the world the ugliness it showed in crucifying the Christ?

And why must we muse on such a scene so full of darkness, thunderings, blood, brutality, tears, sadness, and hate? The worst of the world was demonstrated on that awful day. But we cannot know things about God and His will apart from what He has told us in the scriptures; we can only know what Holy Scripture tells us.

This scene of Christ on the dreadful hill is marked by contrasts. It's Christ's way that He, the Lord of the world, would be recognized by that world through His pain before He would be recognized in His glory. The peace of heaven is betrayed by the kiss of deceit, the One who holds it all is held fast, the bond of peace is bound by fetters of evil. Truth is accused by falsehood. He who stands to forgive is made to stand trial.

Forgiveness is shown no mercy, love is shown hate and scorn. These conclusions for Christ on that day come as a just penalty and judgment for the sin of mankind, which rightly belongs on the shoulders of men. This punishment rightly belongs to Adam, the first man who fell into temptation and dragged all the world down with him. It's Adam who desired what was not his. He wanted to be like God – to *be* God – which caused everything to fall like a bird out of heaven to its death.



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The incarnation of Christ – God being made man – was necessary to reclaim the substance of His creation. Christ's journey here on earth was essential to alter the course of this world. Picture in your mind a great king who sits on his throne in royal splendor. Picture him, sitting on the golden chair, adorned in purple robes, rings on his fingers, jewels about his neck, and a gold crown upon his head. How do you approach such a king? With head bowed, in meekness and humility. Is that not the sort of treatment our Lord Jesus deserved in this world? After all, He *is* God.

But picture now that king's army dressed and ready for battle, having taken its position against the enemy. Its opponents are twice as numerous and four times as fierce. How will the army ever muster the courage to fight the foe? How would the soldiers feel, knowing that the king sits in luxury back in his castle? But . . . what if that king were to descend his throne, put on his battle armor, trade his crown for a helmet, his purple robes for steel plating, a spear in place of his scepter?

Would that not embolden his army? The king rides onto the field of blood, spattered with mud. He rides not behind the troops but in front. How would his army react? Indeed, the king's courage to lead the charge would strengthen the legs of his soldiers, sharpen their minds, and empower their arms for the fight. Fear would make way for courage. This king cares not about his wounds, but surges forth, ready to shed his own blood and to give his life for his people.

This One, this King of glory, goes forth in humility. He comes as one of us and stands as a man in order to do what we cannot. The enemy was too powerful for us. So He comes to bring the enemy to defeat. As in Adam all die, so in Christ – the second Adam – shall all be made alive. The contrast blazes bright: Adam, the man of dust, caused us all to go to dust; Jesus – the man from heaven – came that we might become heavenly (1 Cor. 15:47).

It is expected that the sun would be at its apex at the time the wicked world crucified its Creator. Yet, for the wicked, the sun set instead (Amos 8:9). This king died so that the world might rest in peace. A light shined, dispelling the darkness. For the redeemed, the night shall shine as the day (Psalm 139:12).

God took on our flesh and led forth a solemn procession through the world, walking the path of life. He trod our dusty paths, knowing how it feels for us to be engulfed in the darkness. So much is this the God of love that He was willing to share our pains as a result of sin being in the world.

He was tempted in all points, as we are, yet He was without sin. Jesus knows your pain, He knows your bitter anguish, He experienced your fear and anxiety. But most of all, Jesus suffered your punishment of hell upon the cross, when the Father turned His face away from Him, causing Jesus to say, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?"

The sin of Adam came with a price; that price had to be paid. Such is the love of God



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that He paid that price for us. God saved us by coming in the flesh. He put on the battle armor, He rode alone onto the battlefield and died there for you . . . and for me. As the enemy announced its victory, it saw that victory only from the world's point of view. Satan thought the world was his because of Christ's death, but the greatest contrast of all had come to pass.

"He who was holy made His grave with the wicked"(Isaiah 53:9), suffering the pains of hell. The holy One made His grave with the wicked so that the sinners might make their beds with the Righteous. The sinless One died that sinners would be made alive. Darkness spread its wings that day, so that the light would shine in our lives forever.

His passion and turmoil was for our peace and tranquility, His blood-stained garments for our white robes of righteousness. His agony, anxiety, and despair for your eternal and heavenly peace. The contrast lies in the realization that God took your place. The King descended from His throne to become as one of us that He might gain the victory we could never secure for ourselves. The dawn of the resurrection is drawing near. The victory has been won. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen