

“Every Knee Shall Bow”

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ – His suffering under Pontius Pilate, crucifixion, death and burial – are the very heart, center, and climax of Creation’s history. That Friday we call Good – is The Day of the Lord!

But it doesn’t look so good – it looks gory, not glorious. And as we hear of His Passion and suffer with Him – we may forget that Jesus is truly God. We fail to consider that this man is the One that all mankind shall stand before on the Last Day.

Can you imagine standing before Christ, the Judge – with the Father, Holy Spirit – angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, looking on – and doing, and saying, what we hear in the reading from St. Luke today?

Standing face to face with Christ you accuse Him of misleading the nation – claiming He is stirring up the people? Would the religious authorities get in His face and vehemently accuse Him, and mock Him on that Day?

Pilate, could you stand there before the One sitting in judgment on you – and repeat that you found He had done nothing wrong – and still punish Him – have Him flogged and pummeled by your soldiers? Would you dare to spit on Him? Would you deliver Him over again to the will of sinners?

Standing there – with all the heavenly host looking on – would YOU join the mob to cry “away with [you Jesus], give us the murderer Barabbas”? Would you hold the Judge in contempt, and declare your verdict – “crucify [Jesus], crucify [the Son of God]”?

IF the Jesus whom YOU will stand before on the Last Day – and who IS present in the midst of us this day – could be seen with your eyes, would you walk to His altar and openly scoff at Him, rail at Him – say, away with Him?

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ shows that He was crucified, died, and was buried – that these things were done TO Him – FOR us sinners – FOR us, the guilty ones.

God made Himself nothing – becomes the Suffering Servant – and is obedient to the point of death, even death upon a cross – for the sake of sinners.

All of this because the Father desires that none would be lost – that all would be saved. And so, the Son willingly walks the path the Father has laid out for Him. Though all deserve condemnation – none shall go to hell, except “over my dead body.”

“Father, forgive them” He cries out as He offers up the sacrifice to make atonement for all sinners. “It is finished” is His triumphant cry, as His death brings to its completion, to its fullness – the redemption of all creation.

This is the climax of all history. This is the heart of the Gospel. This is the basis for the judgment of all mankind. This determines eternity for you, and for me.

“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

You stand before Christ today. Do you refuse to bend the knee – do you reject all that He speaks into your ears – the regeneration of His Baptism – His Body and Blood that nourishes unto life everlasting? Do you step over His dead body – crucified and given into death FOR YOU – so that you can step into the lake of fire, your eternal hell?

Or do you approach on bended knee – confessing your sins, your unworthiness – crying out for His mercy – confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord – eager to hear His judgment, and firmly believing Him when He says to you this day – “today you will be with me in Paradise”?

God bless you as you walk with Christ in His Passion this week – with the mind of Christ – knowing and believing that, in Christ, your Savior – you are highly exalted – you are highly exalted to live and reign with Him in heaven, for all eternity. This is most certainly true.

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