

# **SERMON BY REV W HUIZINGA**

## **ON GOOD FRIDAY**

### **ON JOHN 19:18**

#### LITURGY

Votum and Salutation

Psalm 6:1,2

The Ten Words of the Covenant

Psalm 6:5,6

Prayer for the Opening of God's Word

Thankoffering

Psalm 22:5,6

Read - John 19:12-37

Text - John 19:18

Sermon

### **CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED.**

***1. To take your place as rebels.***

***2. To take your punishment, God's curse.***

Hymn 20:1,2,6

Pastoral Prayer

Hymn 19:1,2,3,4

Benediction

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You boys may have heard or read stories about outlaws. An outlaw was a person who had a price on his head. He was wanted dead or alive. Since he lived outside the law, he enjoyed no protection or rights. Without those rights anyone could take his life and receive a reward for doing so.

Jesus became an outlaw for our sakes. His opponents cast him outside the camp, outside the city. He was an outcast.

To illustrate this point think back to the OT great Day of Atonement as recorded in Leviticus 16:

*And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal (verses 26,27).*

Those sacrifices were loaded with the sins of the people. As such they were unclean. Away with them! Burn them. Outside the camp! They are fit only for the dunghill.

This is how they treated Jesus. As an outcast they brought him outside the city to Skull Hill, to Calvary or Golgotha. It was near the city but outside it, so that the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews could say,

*For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest (on the Day of Atonement) as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood (13:11,12).*

They now consider Jesus polluted with sin, unclean, and detestable. *Away with Him!*, they shouted.

What a contrast this is to the words they were shouting just a few days ago. Then they hail Him as their king, shouting, *Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna...* Then they could cite Psalm 24, *lift up your heads, O you gates and be lifted up, for the King of glory comes in.* And he did ride through the gates of Zion to the temple, mounted meekly on a donkey.

But now they angrily shout, *lift up your heads, O gates, and let his outlaw be expelled. Away with Him. Crucify Him.* Our text relates this brutal fact without any gory details.

I preach to you God's Word under this \*THEME:

## **CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED.**

- 1. To take your place as rebels.***
- 2. To take your punishment, God's curse.***

### ***1. Christ is crucified - To take your place as rebels.***

In the beginning God created us as his image. God wanted created beings with whom He could enjoy fellowship. God created them as the crowning climax of his beautiful world.

Yet the unthinkable took place. In Garden of Eden we rebelled. We trusted the arch-enemy, Satan! We believed his lies, thinking that God to be a tyrant who brooked no equals. We took sides with the Enemy! This is high treason. Think of someone working for the Australian government, but selling secrets to the militant factions in Iraq. Treason!

Governments deal ruthlessly with such spies and traitors.

I think of the spy about whom King David wrote in Psalm 55.

*For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; Then I could bear it. Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; Then I could hide from him. But it was you, a man my equal, My companion and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, And walked to the house of God in the throng (vv 12-14).*

What happens to such betrayers, such snakes in the grass?

*He has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; He has broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, But war was in his heart; His words were softer than oil, Yet they were drawn swords.*

*But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; Bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days; But I will trust in You.*

Such traitors deserve death. David and Solomon did not hesitate to mete out this justice for traitors.

In the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ this prophecy about traitors became fulfilled in Judas Iscariot. You know what happened to him. It was a horrible end for a dastardly crime.

Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, you and I are such rebels. We deserve the charge of being rebels. You and I deserve the verdict of guilty as charged. Do we not show daily that we would rather rebel and go our own ways than listen to God and to others in authority over us? Oh yes, we have a rebellious nature. We truly are sons and daughters of Adam and Eve.

What must God do with us rebels?

What happened to rebels or cruel enemies in the OT? Let's just read some passages.

*"Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall put away the evil from among you, and all Israel shall hear and fear. " If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, "his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God (Deut 21:21-23).*

Treason certainly is a capital crime.

The next example concerns the rout of the five kings of the Amorites. Joshua asked the Lord to make the sun stand still so they could avenge themselves on their enemies. God did so. He captured the five kings, locking them in a cave, while he completed the rout. Then we read:

*Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave." And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the*

*men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and put their feet on their necks. Then Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." And afterward Joshua struck them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening. So it was at the time of the going down of the sun that Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day (Joshua 10:22-27).*

This is what God does to his enemies. He exposes them to public humiliation. These enemies deserve the ban, the curse of God.

God, though very merciful, still keeps to his justice. To fill his justice God sent his one and only Son to take our place as rebels.

This comes out very clearly in the trial of Jesus, when the Jews hand Jesus over to the Romans to be sentenced to death. He is a revolutionary, a leader of rebels, they cry out. *Away with Him!*

Our text confirms this.

*where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.*

Two bandits hung crucified with Jesus. These were not ordinary robbers. Rome usually punished ordinary robbers with lighter sentences. No, they were zealous bandits who used terrorism or banditry – stealing, burning, and even murder – in order supposedly to rid the land of the hated Romans. They were freedom fighters using robbery and murder. One hung on each side of Jesus. In this way the enemies of Jesus successfully presented Jesus as the leader of bandits who deserved death by crucifixion. It was the most cruel death, a death which would deter others from pursuing the same aims. Surely this would deter anyone from thinking about following this Galilean anymore, they thought.

Yet this too was according to the Scriptures. Isaiah 53:12 says, *he was numbered with the transgressors*. Brothers and sisters, we see how God ordained all this to happen, so that we would see how Jesus took our place.

Sometimes we complain that God is unfair to us. What have we done to deserve this disease or this setback? Brothers and sisters, boys and girls, we then start wrongly. Start with the fact that in the beginning we rebelled, we committed high treason against God. We deserve nothing! We deserve the stigma of an outcast. Yet God in mercy sends his Son. God casts Him out. God lets Him take our place. Jesus is numbered with the rebels as the leader of outlaws. Take your starting point in these facts.

Jesus even carried the curse, the ban which we outlaws deserved. That is our next point.

## **2. Christ is crucified – to take your punishment, God's curse.**

To see this we must ask another question - *why did Jesus die on the cross?* Why did the Jews not stone him to death, for example? Did the Jews not condemn him for blasphemy, for calling himself the Son of God? Certainly! Well, the sentence for blasphemy surely was death by stoning. Why was Jesus crucified?

We need prophecy to answer these questions. We have already pointed to the OT, how God used the sentence of crucifixion for certain capital crimes. High treason fits into this category. We learned from Isaiah 53, the detailed prophecy about Jesus' death, that He would be numbered with the transgressors. Jesus would be placed alongside rebels, criminals.

Yet the disciples understood it only after Christ's resurrection. Then Jesus opened the Scriptures and explained why he died and why on the cross. But they could have known it beforehand. Jesus did clearly point to it.

Since we take our text from John, let's use his gospel.

*"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:14,15).*

Jesus here reminds us how Israel suffered poisonous snake bites in the wilderness. Moses placed a bronze snake on a pole. God healed whoever looked at the bronze snake lifted up on the pole. God cures the bite of death. Likewise, God will lift Jesus up on a pole, on the cross. God cures all who look in faith on Christ crucified. The serpent's sting is removed only by the look of faith at Christ on the cross.

*Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things (John 8:28).*

Leading Jews refuse to accept Jesus as coming down from heaven, as God's Son, who speaks the words of the Father. The cross makes Jews realize that Jesus is the Christ who fulfils Scriptures. He is the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Jesus is not a charlatan or a self-made Saviour.

*And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die. The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, "The Son of Man must be lifted up"? Who is this Son of Man?" - John 12:32-34.*

Jesus requests of the Father, "glorify Me". A voice came from heaven for benefit of bystanders, *I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again...* Then Jesus predicts that when *He is lifted up from the earth, He will draw all men to myself.* He said this to indicate what type of death he was to undergo. Jesus clearly shows He would die on the cross. He would be lifted up. And its effect would be international - *for all men.* Please note how this underlines what we proclaimed in our first point. Jesus takes your place, the place of sinners, sinners from all nations and from all ranks of people.

But note also that Jesus refers to his dying hour as *the hour for the Son of man to be glorified.* It will be his crowning moment.

Jesus also predicted more than once that he would die by crucifixion:

*"The son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify (Him). And the third day He will rise again (Matthew 20:18-19)."*

So God's plan includes crucifixion for our Saviour who took our place. Our sins deserve crucifixion. Please take that message to heart. It will make you hate your sins and your sinful nature. It will make your heart burst with love for your God and for your Saviour.

As we consider this need for Jesus to die on the cross, we find out that both Roman law and Jewish law became intertwined in this trial and execution.

We need to remember two important facts.

The legal definition of crucifixion was laid down by the Romans. Its theological meaning has been revealed in the OT Scriptures. God combined these two purposely.

First of all, Jesus underwent a trial by Roman law in front of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. His trial did not occur in obscurity but in front of the world. His trial and death had importance for the whole world, for all men, as Jesus himself said. It could not occur in a dark lane stealthily by ambush or an assassin's knife, as his enemies might have liked. No, God would use the appointed authorities to sentence his Son. Above the head of Jesus on the cross stood an inscription written in Hebrew/Aramaic, Latin and Greek. It was for all men to read. God publicly demonstrated that the Sin-bearer hung from the cross. His execution happened in front of the eyes of the Roman Empire, the whole inhabited world. Its pentecostal perspective opens here. To use the language of John's gospel, *this is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*. Again, as John records, Jesus said that *God so loved the world that He sacrificed his only-begotten Son*.

So Jesus underwent the cruelty of death on the cross, Roman style.

Why, for instance, did Jesus hang until He was dead? Brothers and sisters, God allowed the Roman custom to prevail in this respect. Jews would have killed him first and then hung his dead body on a tree. But we know from the gospel that Rome sentenced Jesus according to their law and customs. This meant they nailed Jesus, while alive, to the cross. They let him hang till dead. Sometimes they hastened death by breaking their legs or spearing them. For Jesus it meant He consciously, while still alive, experienced the curse which you and I deserved. He would utter those poignant words, *My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?* He endured the curse of God for us, right to the very end. Afterward he could utter, *it is finished*.

In Jewish terms crucifixion meant being an outlaw, a person under the curse of God. If God cursed someone or a nation as the seven nations of Canaan, it meant God banned them completely. God decreed that they be uprooted, man, woman and child. It is a terrible thing to be banned or cursed by God. In Jewish law such a person was first of all executed, killed. Then their dead bodies were hung on a tree to public exposure and shame. For what man had done to these outlaws did not suffice. Let them hang between earth and heaven. Man handed them over to God to be cursed outrightly by God.

So the main point is that the cross underlines the curse of God. Already at his birth there had been the hint of such a curse. A sword would pierce the heart of mother Mary because of this curse. Yet the curse exploded like a cloudburst of hail on him. Why?

We deserved it, brothers and sisters, boys and girls. In the beginning God cursed the earth because of man's sin, cursed the serpent cursed the man and woman. Yet the mercy of God allowed a moratorium on this curse. God's plan of redemption through the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ our Lord, went into effect.

But when Jesus came the full curse exploded on him like the earthquake. God would not postpone it anymore. God no longer curbs his curse which

can kill both body and soul in hell. So it erupts like a volcano. That is what the cross means. Its full meaning hits us when God darkened the earth in a blanket of blackness as dark as the plague in Egypt. God's wrath descends. The outlaw has no rights. *Away with Him!* Ban him! This is the Day of the Lord, a day of gloom and darkness, the day of God's dark anger, the day of mourning and judgment.

Had David, who experienced life as an outlaw under King Saul, not prophesied this in Psalm 22: verses 12-13, 16-17?

*Many bulls have surrounded Me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, Like a raging and roaring lion. For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.*

Do the Scriptures relate this cruel execution by crucifixion to elicit our sympathy? Remember Christ's words to the women who bewailed him as he carried the cross-beam to his death - *weep for yourselves!* For if we do not understand that Jesus underwent the wrath of God on the cross then we have not understood the cross. Then it will not speak to us.

The arms of the soldiers are God's arms; the nails are the swords of judgment; and the angry, flickering eyes of the soldiers and scribes are the angels of wrath. One day those angels will descend with the archangel's call, at the sound of the last trumpet. Then Christ will judge this sinful earth. His awful curse will terrify its inhabitants. For this curse on the outlaw, Jesus Christ our Lord, anticipates the final curse at the end of this world.

You deserved this curse. Brothers and sisters, we are the worm, we are the outlaws, who should be cast out without rights or mercy. Yet in his great love Jesus Christ our Lord took our place as the scape-goat, the cursed One, so that on the great Day of Judgment you may appear before the judgment seat of Christ without terror. You need never fear the Day of the Lord.

Amen.