

Reality of Christ's suffering, death imparts true lesson of Lenten season

By Dr. JOHN M. DRICKAMER
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We are now in Lent when Christians concentrate on Christ's suffering and death for our sins. In Advent, when we prepare for Christmas, we often go over the Old Testament prophecies about the human birth of the Son of God. In Lent it should be helpful to reflect on an Old Testament prophecy about the human death of God the Son.

CLERGY COMMENT

Christ suffered. Christ's rejection by men is described in verses 6-8: "But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." There is a similar picture in verses 12 and 13. To see the fulfillment, look up Matthew 27:30-43.

It is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." The only detail here that is explicitly mentioned in the New Testament is Christ's thirst (John 19:28; Matthew 27:48). But we know from secular writers who described crucifixion that this was the kind of agony it produced. Christ's body hung there, supported by the nails in His hands and feet. The weight of His body produced most of the pain, for it led to the dislocation of the shoulders and other joints. It also caused unnatural position and pressure for the trunk of the body and the organs inside.

it. This distortion of the body shows up in verse 17: "I may tell (count) all my bones." Anyone who knows the crucifixion story will recognize verse 16 as a reference to Jesus being nailed to the cross: "They pierced my hands and feet." Verse 18 says: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." That was done by the Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:35). Scholars have pointed to the similarity between "He hath done this" (verse 31) and "It is finished" (John 19:30). Even more could be said, but if you have read the whole Psalm and are familiar with the narrative of Jesus' death, you are probably asking why I have not yet referred to the most obvious point. Jesus quoted this psalm on the cross when He said: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46, where Matthew shows that Jesus quoted this in the original Hebrew).

It is Psalm 22:1 that points to the greatest suffering of Christ. But it is also that verse that points to the greatest comfort for us. Christ was crucified personally. But He willingly and voluntarily became guilty before His heavenly Father for the sins of all mankind. He was rejected by the Father. Here is a mystery which we cannot fathom, that God the Son was rejected by God the Father. But it is a most important fact. He was rejected so that we might be accepted. Our sins are forgiven for one reason and for one reason only: that the spotless Lamb of God took them away from us and upon Himself and Himself suffered the full punishment for them on the cross. Christ was forsaken. We are accepted by God. That is the Gospel. You may study the Bible all your life and learn all kinds of wonderful things. But the Gospel remains central. Christ was forsaken so that we might be accepted by God.

Trinity United

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and pews built and installed in 1853. The Acton church continued to grow and records from 1872 show that it finally obtained the status of the head of a preaching circuit shared with Crewson's Corners and Silver Creek. A year after Rev. John Stephenson was assigned to the Acton circuit, membership in the Acton church doubled, making the 25-year old frame structure very quickly inadequate.

PARKING LOT
It was then that the cornerstone was laid for the building with spires. The 1875 building sat where the present parking lot is. The church served the congregation for 86 years until 1953, when following a Sunday service, as the last of the congregation came trooping out the church doors, a large section of plaster came tumbling down from the ceiling into the pews where people had earlier been seated. The building was condemned for use, so that the congregation began using the basement for a time following this, but there were plaster cracks in the ceiling down there too.

Until the new sanctuary currently serving the United church congregation could be built, the parish used the YMCA for their Sunday services.

The new building was finally erected in 1961 on a lot the congregation had bought in the early 1950s. Before, the land had been used for a volleyball court.

WIPE DEBT
To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the United Church of Canada, Trinity United Church decided to wipe off their debt for the new brick building, which they achieved by the end of December, 1975.

Marguerite Taylor, 83, remembers getting all dressed up to go to her first service of the United Church. Her parents were members of Knox Presbyterian church in Acton but left when the Presbyterians voted against union in 1925.

Mrs. Taylor said about ten families left the Presbyterian church to join the formerly Methodist congregation on Mill Street, when it accepted the call to union.

"My father and mother felt union was what we should have and not Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational churches, and they were staunch Presbyterians," she

said. "It took a lot for them to leave their church." Mrs. Taylor's father had a hardware store on Mill Street, across from where the YMCA stands. It was called Symon Hardware. "We had several people who refused to come into the store afterwards," Mrs. Taylor said. "Over there (United Church), we were welcomed and over here (Presbyterian Church), we were shunned once we left. It died down over the years."

THEIR SEATS
Mr. Johnston remembers acting as an usher and taking people in to their seats, when he was 15. He said there would be about three boys who would help people to their pews. Raised and having lived his life on a farm, Mr. Johnston had to get up extra early Sunday mornings in order to get his chores done so he could

go to church. He said he would get up about 5 a.m. and leave for church about 10 a.m.

"It was a meeting place on Sunday for a lot of women. My grandmother used to say 'I wouldn't see anybody if I didn't see them on Sunday.'" Mrs. Taylor said. "She always kept one black taffeta dress for Sunday (the day she died)."

Mrs. Taylor was a member of the choir until her eyesight began giving her trouble. The church now has three choirs: a senior choir with 20 adults, a junior choir with 25 young people, and a church choir made up of 12 children from kindergarten to Grade 3.

As well, the church is preparing a musical called "Moses and the freedom fanatics" for the end of April. Last year they put on "Cool in the Furnace", a Biblical musical.

Lutheran services set

Lenten services continue Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. through March 31 at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Georgetown. In addition to a psalm, a reading from the passion narrative and Lenten hymns, most services will feature a "first-person" sermon in which the pastor portrays one of the characters from the passion history. During Holy Week, the church will receive the Lord's Supper April 8 at 7:30 and the Good Friday service is set for 10 a.m.

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Missionaries visit next week

Two seasoned Canadian missionaries will be visiting Georgetown March 14 to 17.

Ruth Patterson, working with Cambodian refugees in France, and Cecil Smith, on leave from Guayaquil,

Ecuador, will be attending a Missionary Convention at the Georgetown Alliance Church on Main Street.

Cecil Smith has been establishing churches in the highly populated areas of Ecuador for 25 years. He is

an animated speaker and a proven veteran in his field.

Ruth Patterson's role is vital to the Cambodians trying to establish their lives in France. Her insights into these Cambodian circum-

stances and great needs are indeed fascinating.

Come and listen. Come and ask them questions. For further information, call the Georgetown Alliance Church at 877-9818 or Pastor Peter Ralph at 853-3523.

Annual World Day of Prayer

"Gathered for Worship, Scattered for Service" was the theme of the annual World Day of Prayer Service which was held at St. Andrew's United Church Friday.

It was an open invitation from the Women of Ireland, inviting people throughout the world to join in an act of worship and self-dedication to God's service. Margo McVittie, president of St. Andrew's U.C.W., welcomed everyone present. Members from various churches in the

area took part in the service. Rev. Lynne Bandy was the guest speaker, and gave a very moving talk on "Dedication

and Sacrifice in our Lives". Jeannette Crimes rendered two beautiful religious songs

entitled "God's People" and "My Task". Refreshments were served following the service.

Chamber Singers due

Herald Special
Maple Avenue Baptist Church is pleased to announce the coming of the Chamber Singers, a 16-voice

ensemble from the Baptist Bible College in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. The group is on a 12-day tour through New York, Canada,

Michigan and Ohio representing the college in churches and schools. Organized in 1973 by

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