

Text: Hebrews 4:14-15, 5:7-9 An American Translation.

Good Friday.

April 10, 2020.

Grace and peace are yours through our suffering Savior Jesus, who gives us everlasting salvation. Amen.

Have you ever been to a celebration where they have had one of those chocolate fountains? Pretty nice, right? Continual chocolate, cascading chocolate, a cornucopia of cacao, churning, causing mouths to water and lines to form, longing, waiting, wishing for a taste. Ever taken a strawberry you thought was going to be sweet, but turned out to be sour, but then the silky sweetness of the chocolate made it sweet again? Ever lost a marshmallow in the pool at the bottom and couldn't fish it out again?

On Good Friday, we are here to celebrate a different fountain. It doesn't look nearly as sweet as a chocolate fountain. It's a cross. An instrument of torture, not tastiness. A man is hanging there, nails in his hands, a spike through his feet, thorns on his head, bleeding, slowly dying, emaciated, ribs sticking out, tongue sticking to the roof of his mouth. It's gruesome. Not glorious. And you know what the worst part is? It's my fault! I'm the reason this perfect man is hanging there. My sins spiked his feet. My naughtiness nailed him. Those thorns? Through my terrible thoughts, those thorns were thrust there. That picture looked so sweet, but it led me to sin. You know what this fountain does? Covers that sin. God can't see it anymore. Think of that marshmallow dropped into the pool at the bottom of the fountain. That's your guilt, dropped in the blood of Jesus, drowned in his love, pulled under the pool of his pardon. Gone. Forgiven! Forgotten. The fountain of forgiveness spilling from this cross never runs dry. The spring of salvation is always fresh, always new, always covering every sin. I know it's hard to look at Jesus bleeding, dying. But look. He's bleeding for you. He's dying for you. He's giving everlasting salvation to you.

Jesus gives everlasting salvation as our Great High Priest. A priest does two main things. He offers sacrifices. Jesus offered the perfect, once and for all sacrifice of himself for all our sins. Jesus is the greatest high priest offering the only sacrifice that ever really mattered: himself. The other main thing the priest did was go between people and God. Well, look at Jesus our Great High Priest who gives everlasting salvation. He bridged the gap between heaven and earth. How far is that? He has gone through the heavens and he is still in heaven and yet he still is with us on earth. What a great high priest. What a reason to cling to what we confess. Hold on. Hold fast. Cling together. It's so cool when we say the Lord's Prayer together. The devil hates it when God's people confess faith in Jesus together. Hold on. Hold fast. We have a high priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses. Sympathize literally means to suffer with. It has the idea to be passionate. Jesus is passionate for you. Jesus' greatest passion is that you enjoy heaven with him. So he came and suffered on earth. He suffered in temptation. He sweat blood in his prayers. He was tempted in every way, just as we are, but with one big difference: he was without sin. He never sinned. He was holy. His holiness is a fountain of holiness for us. See that fountain spilling out holiness, your tasty treat. See his perfection pouring out from the fountain of his body, perfection presented to you as a perfect present, a free present. Jesus' sinlessness isn't just some good example we should try to live up to. Jesus sinlessness substitutes for our sins. God only looks at the faultless fountain, this spring of salvation.

Jesus came to the one who could save him from death and prayed and pleaded, crying loud with tears and because he feared God, he was heard. Man, there's a lot going on here. First is probably the mystery of Good Friday. How can Jesus pray to God, I thought Jesus was God and is God. Yes, Jesus is,

was and always will be God. But on this day, God treated Jesus like the sinner, pouring out punishment on him, so now God treats us like the holy ones, pouring out salvation on us. Jesus was saved from death, not by avoiding death, but by rising from the dead. Think about that. God could save Jesus from death and did save Jesus from death. But God saved him, not by having Jesus avoid death, but by raising Jesus from the dead. You too will be saved from death, but not because you will not physically die, but because you will be raised from the dead. Think of how that changes physical death. Not an enemy to be avoided, but rather an end to all my suffering. When I die I leave all sadness.

Look at Jesus' prayer. He was heard. That doesn't mean he got what he asked for. Jesus, in his humble life on earth, prayed with loud cries and sweat like blood, that if there was any way possible, that Jesus could avoid suffering, beating, nailing to a cross. But there wasn't. That's what Jesus had to endure to save us. Jesus ended all his prayers with, "God, your will, not mine, be done." God heard Jesus. God said, "I hear you! You know it's going to stink to suffer. It's going to be the worst thing anyone has ever had to endure. Ever. But suffering is the only way to save these people you so passionately love." God heard Jesus. God still made him suffer. God hears our prayers. He hears us. He doesn't always remove suffering. Sometimes he makes us endure to see his will is best. Sometimes he wants us to learn salvation comes after suffering.

Jesus himself learned from what he suffered. Jesus learned from the experience of dying on the cross what suffering is. Jesus, and he alone, suffered on the cross. Jesus suffered on the cross, alone. So you will never be alone. So you will never suffer alone. Jesus was so passionate about being with you, he walked the way of the cross, alone. I know I keep using that word passionate. But the word for suffer and the word for sympathize both contain that word passion. Think of how passionate you have to be about someone to suffer for them. What did Jesus get out of suffering? Beating, whipping, mocking, nailing, crucifying. What did Jesus get out of suffering? You! Jesus got exactly what he wanted. You. He wanted you by his side, for all eternity. Jesus wanted to give you salvation.

And that's exactly what Jesus got. Salvation for you. When he was finished. When you heard those first words of verse nine did the words of Jesus ring in your ears? "It is finished!" It is done. My work to win salvation is complete. I finished that work in the past. That work is still finished in the present. That work will always be finished, for your children, finished! For your grandchildren, finished. For you, on the day you go to heaven. Finished!

So now he is the one who gives everlasting salvation. Look at those words. The One who gives everlasting salvation. There's many ways to picture these words, "The One who gives everlasting salvation." One way is Jesus is the author of everlasting salvation. Like, "Jesus wrote the book on salvation." Hmm. He literally did write the book on salvation. Or picture it this way, "Jesus is the source of everlasting salvation." Like if you want salvation, you have to go to him. He's the source. But Jesus is more than just an author who wrote a book and left it on a shelf. He's more than just the source and you have to seek him out and find him. Jesus gives everlasting salvation. Salvation spills out from the cross. The Spirit scoops it up and pours salvation on your head in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Yes, baptism is that fountain of forgiveness, which will never run dry. Never run dry. From the cross, the blood of Jesus continually flows. The Spirit scoops up your sins and washes them clean in this fountain of flowing forgiveness. The Spirit puts this blood on your lips and showers your soul with everlasting salvation, over and over and over. Jesus doesn't merely say, "I'm the source, come to me." He says, "I'm the fountain. I'll find you. I'll flood you with forgiveness. I'll drown your guilt so

deeply you won't see it. Even the devil won't be able to find it. I'm the fountain. I have washed you clean. I give everlasting salvation." Amen.

When Jesus was finished, he gave everlasting salvation. Amen.