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**JESUS HAS GIVEN ALL FOR YOU**  
**Sermon for Good Friday, 2025**  
**John 19:23-24**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is taken from John 19:23-24, part of our Gospel for today: **When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His outer garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, and the undergarment. The undergarment was without a seam, woven from the top in one piece.** <sup>24</sup> Therefore, they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but let us throw dice for it, to decide who will get it!”

**This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that says: “They divided My outer garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.”**

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Because Pilate did not know what to do with Jesus, he had Him sent to Herod. Before long, though, Jesus was back standing in front of Pilate, where the distracted governor finally yielded to the demands of the Jews and *delivered Him to be crucified*.

In the simplest language imaginable, John presents the most horrible crime in history, “*Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Jesus went out, carrying His own cross, to the place that was called “the Place of the Skull”, which is called “Golgotha” in Aramaic. There they crucified Him with two other men, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle*” (John 19:16-18).

How simple are the words “*They crucified Him,*” yet there is a richness of detail.

If you were an eyewitness to the crucifixion, what do you think you would have written if you were standing there watching? Maybe you would have noted such things as the nails being driven through Jesus’ hands and feet or the agony Jesus would have shown when the cross was lifted into position.

Well, John records one detail of the crucifixion that is seemingly insignificant. John notes that when the soldiers had crucified Jesus, **“they took His outer garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, and the undergarment. The undergarment was without a seam, woven from the top in one piece.”**<sup>24</sup> Therefore, they said to one another, **“Let us not tear it but let us throw dice for it, to decide who will get it!”** The action of taking Jesus’ clothes seems unimportant, but this was done whenever someone was crucified. According to the customs and laws of the Romans, whatever the person being crucified had in his possession *became the property of the executioners*, and it is interesting to note that all four evangelists—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all mention this same thing. Just for a moment, our attention is drawn away from the One who is hanging from the cross, and we are invited to consider the *actions of the soldiers* as they engage in a game of chance while Jesus, the Saviour of the world, hangs over them.

The four soldiers crucified Jesus and divided His outer garments among them. There were four pieces of clothing nearly of the same value. There was the headgear, the outer cloak-like garment, the girdle, and the sandals. One of these went to each of the soldiers, but there was a fifth article of clothing, and this was the undergarment, which **“was without a seam, woven from the top in one piece.”** Cutting the tunic would have ruined it, so they threw dice for it.

The actions of the soldiers clearly show the feelings of their hearts. Their one desire was for gain, for possession. All sentiment, all finer qualities and everything noble were dead in these soldiers. As they were professional soldiers of Rome, it was part of their trade to enrich themselves by taking what belonged to others.

Jesus had very little, yet these soldiers acted like it was a great treasure. It was not worth their time and trouble. The greatest, most awful drama of all times was being enacted before their very eyes, but they only had eyes and thoughts for a few pieces of clothing. These insignificant things gripped their attention so that *they paid no attention* to the One hanging near them, slowly shedding His blood. The almighty God was dying—also for them, but they engaged in a game of chance to possess the dying Man’s clothes.

Picturing in our minds, the sight of these men throwing dice probably fills us with disgust. Maybe we tell ourselves: *“If I had stood there, looking at His grief-stricken, patient face, His bleeding head, His lacerated back, His wounds pouring forth new streams of blood, all else in the world would have been nothing to me. I would have gazed upon Him until my eyes filled with tears. I would have disregarded all else, my family, business, pleasure, and comfort, just to stand and not miss a single move, a single word.”* But are you sure this is really how you would have acted?

Let’s not spend our time under the cross denouncing and condemning the actors in this great drama. Instead, we need to see ourselves in what those soldiers were doing. In identifying ourselves with the soldiers, we begin with the words: **“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus.”**

Let’s get it straight: *that means you and me*. Who crucified Jesus? These soldiers who stretched Him upon the beam, drove nails into His hands and feet, and then raised the cross? If that is all we see in Golgotha, then we have not as yet entered into the mystery of that death. There is a far greater truth behind this scene of four coarse professional soldiers obeying the orders of their superior officer in executing an innocent Man. There is more here than the greatest miscarriage of justice this world has ever seen.

They didn’t realise it, ***but these soldiers were carrying out God’s eternal plan.*** From eternity, it had been decided that in the fullness of time, the Son, the Second Person of the Godhead, very God of very God, should become man, suffer, be crucified, and die the most shameful death. Why? For what purpose? What called for such a tremendous sacrifice? Why should Christ be crucified in the loving heart of God long before this world ever came into existence, before there were men to commit this great crime?

From eternity, God knew that after He would create man in His own image and likeness to live with his Creator in undisturbed communion and closest friendship forever, man would turn from God and choose to serve Satan and share the devil’s eternal lot. Through sin, man would be lost forever. But God would redeem man and undo the evil which he had brought upon himself by disobedience.

In the fullness of time, God would send forth His Son.<sup>1</sup> This God-man would suffer and die. He would take upon Himself the sins of the world and suffer the punishment so that men could be free and be restored to their relationship of children of God, again be accepted into God's family, and live with God forever in righteousness and innocence.

God saw from eternity that you and I would be born into this world. He knew that we would inherit the sinful nature of our parents, becoming His enemies and being lost in all eternity. And so, God determined to do something about you and me. If we should be redeemed from Satan, if we were not to live and die as God's enemies, if we were not to be lost, then God's Son *must be crucified* to pay the penalty and suffer the consequences of our sins. God could only make us His friends by showing His love for us in that He died for us.

Do you still ask: who crucified Jesus? Who made this great sacrifice necessary? Whose sins brought Jesus to the cross? Who nailed Him to the tree? To say the soldiers did it leaves it all without meaning. If it has any meaning to us personally, we see ourselves leading Him into death by our sins, driving the nails by our crimes against a loving God. Not only the men who actually performed the deed but all who made this awful scene necessary by their sins crucified the Saviour. Who crucified Jesus? We did.

**“When the soldiers had crucified Jesus,”** they ignored Him and threw dice under the cross. What a picture of our own ridiculously materialistic age! In the shadow of the cross, so many today are preoccupied with the eager scramble for possessions, clothes, advantages, amusement, adornment, and pleasure. Jesus Christ is lifted above the world, but men have no time to gaze upon Him believingly. They would rather give their energy and time to things more important to them. The higher and nobler things, like the soul and the life to come, Christ dying on the cross for the world's salvation, are forgotten over the perishable things of this world.

Are we immune to the materialism of the world which surrounds us? No, we are not. It is sad but so very true that we tend to place other things before the Lord. Attending worship and Bible studies are often at the bottom of our to-do lists.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 4:4

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We may say we have faith in our Lord, but do we take the time to feed and strengthen that faith? Do we take Hebrews 10:25 seriously when it warns us of “*not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near*” (Hebrews 10:25)?

Seeking a keen interest in the life of the church is seen as being not that important. Many who once assembled together with us no longer do. The season of Easter is seen as nothing more than a holiday from work and a time to get sick from eating too many Easter eggs! God forbid any of you are like this! You and I are living in the shadow of the cross. So, having crucified Jesus with our sins and living in this shadow, can we spend our time playing a sordid game? Is the only thing we worry about is that we shall get our full share of the things of this world? Do we fear that we may lose something if we should take our eyes off the game even for a moment? In the mad scramble for our earthly pleasures, we forget that our soul needs food and something to cover our nakedness before God. Many will say that “*a man must live*” but forget that he must die.

“**Let us throw dice.**” Will that be said of any of us? The day and time have come to gather in the place where Christ is held up before the eyes of men. You are invited to go to the house of God for an hour to lift your hearts above the affairs of earth and raise your eyes to Him, who has died for you. Do you obey the call, or are you so busy playing the game for the things of this world, so engrossed in the things of the body and this life that you fear you will miss something if you spend a little time looking at the Saviour?

The call comes to do something for Christ. That call resounds every minute of your life. Remember the solemn promise of Jesus, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you*” (Matthew 6:33). Jesus tells us to make His kingdom and His righteousness the number one priority in our lives. We are to remember that God rules the whole world in the interest of His believers. He is all-powerful, infinitely merciful, and gracious, and His wisdom knows no bounds—even the wisdom of sending His only Son to die on the cross, taking the full punishment of our sins upon Himself.

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From the indifferent executioners, turn your eyes to Him who hangs above them. He was poor at birth when He lay in the manger; poor in His life when He had nowhere to lay His head. But never was He as poor as now, when He gave up His garments and hung naked upon the cross. Some of us think we are poor. Is any among us as poor as He was? He had but one coat, and He gave that up for us. He had one pair of sandals, and He gave it up for us. He had so little comfort in His life; yet He gave up that little for us. Will you give up anything cheerfully for Him if once you realise and appreciate what He did for you, what He means to you?

We know that hell would be before us if we did not have a glorious Substitute. Jesus came forward and said: *“I shall bear his punishment for him. Pour hell on Me, Father; let Me drink damnation dry.”* And He did. He endured all those pains and torments, and now we are free. Since Jesus hung upon the cross naked, we have a cloak to hide our nakedness before God. If we are clothed in the garment of Christ’s righteousness, God will accept us.

If we keep in mind that: *“Jesus saved me from hell by suffering it Himself, He gave Himself to buy my eternal happiness,”* we cannot continue throwing dice under the cross. What the Bible calls the pride of life will have lost its attraction.

Finally, then, when we have fully realised that we have crucified Jesus by our sins and, more important still, that He was crucified for our sins, what then? May it be said of us: *“They ceased from throwing dice; they were no longer so engrossed in the game for possessions and clothes that they had no eyes for Christ, but they spent their life gazing at Him who hangs over them, meditating upon His love, and they said one to another: ‘Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.’ ‘For our sakes He became poor, so miserably and shamefully poor, that we through His poverty may be rich.’”* Amen.

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

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PRAYER FOR GOOD FRIDAY

O God the Father Almighty, we praise You for Your eternal wisdom and mercy, in which You ordained that Your Son should be the sacrifice for our sin. We praise You that, by His being lifted up on the cross, He draws all people to Himself, taking away their iniquity, and granting them peace.

In this holy hour we thank and praise You for His sacrificial love, for His perfect obedience, for His patience in suffering, for His willingness to endure even the cross, and for His submission to death.

Help us to see, in the darkness that accompanied His dying, in the shaking of the earth, and in the splitting of the rocks, how great an evil was done by sinful people, how great a life was ended, and how great a death was inflicted. But through the tearing open of the veil of the Temple, and the opening of the graves of the saints, show us our sure entrance into the heavenly Holy of holies.

We thank You, O Father, for all that Jesus Your Son, our Lord, has done, for all that He has suffered, for all that He has given us, and for all that He has promised us. We bow in adoration, and offer our prayers from the depths of grateful hearts. We join with the angels and with all Your redeemed people of every race, tribe, nation, and language in raising our song of thanksgiving: “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honour, glory, and praise for ever.”

As we remember our Saviour’s passion, grant that we may treasure the things that belong to our salvation. As we remember His suffering, make us ready to pass through many troubles to enter the kingdom of God. As we remember His wounds, equip us to cope with every painful struggle. As we remember His crucifixion, teach us to crucify our worthless passions and desires. As we remember His death, help us to be ready to place our spirit in Your hands. As we remember His burial, help us to remember that He has transformed the graves of all His believers.

We rejoice, O Father, that we have received Your mercy and seen Your glory in the face of Jesus Christ. Give us Your continuing grace through Him who died and rose again for us, and who reigns as the Lamb on the throne for ever and ever. Amen.