

Sermon for Good Friday 2001—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—4/13/2001

Title: “The Silent Witness—His death”

Text: John 19: 31-37

Introduction: *Illus.: Tell the Truth*

Theme: Of all the witnesses to Jesus death, the most compelling was his own silence in death which gave indisputable evidence that a death had occurred, a payment made, a salvation secured

• **A Hostile Witness**

1. **PRINT AND READ JOHN 19: 31-32**
2. **ILLUS.: A PREJUDICED WITNESS**
3. The chief priest expected and wanted Jesus dead
 - a. To satisfy their fear that he might remain alive (or come back to life—last be worst than first)
 - b. There was a moratorium on leaving dying people on a cross
 - *“When a convicted person is put to death, never leave his dead body hung on a pole overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone whose body is hung on a pole is cursed by God. The land that the LORD your God is giving you must never become unclean.” Deut. 21:22-23*
 - c. The “big Sabbath” of the Passover was at hand and the crucifixion was out on the road into Jerusalem
4. So to assure that Jesus was dead the option of breaking the legs to hasten death was chosen

• **The Physical Evidence**

1. **PRINT AND READ JOHN 19: 33-34**
2. The other two criminals had to be unmercifully killed because they were still alive
3. Jesus was dead so that there was no need to break his legs—testimony of soldiers and physical evidence of body
4. **ILL.: SEPARATION OF THE SOLIDS & FLUID OF THE BLOOD natural occurrence following death**
5. God wanted us to have the testimony of the blood and the water
 - a. As gruesome as it may seem—evidence of a death’s occurrence needed in order for the payment to be complete
 - b. **PRINT AND READ 1 JOHN 5: 5-12**

• **The Eye Witness**

1. **PRINT AND READ JOHN 19: 35**
2. **ILLUS.: THE UNSUSPECTING WITNESS (car accident—no reason to make up events)**
3. The soldier who pierce Jesus gave testimony (might have even become a believer) that what he saw was true
4. *When we apostles told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we didn't base our message on clever myths that we made up. Rather, we witnessed his majesty with our own eyes. . . So we regard the words of the prophets as confirmed beyond all doubt. You're doing well by paying attention to their words. 2 Peter 1:16, 19*

• **A Promise Confirmed and Kept**

1. **PRINT AND READ JOHN 19: 36-37**
2. One’s promise is only as good as one’s word
 - a. God made a prediction/promise through David and Zechariah and led it to be fulfilled in the soldiers actions
 - b. If God didn’t keep these, we could not be sure He would keep his promise to accept Jesus’ sacrifice but He did
3. God has made us a promise and given us His Word and He will not go back on it
 - a. *“God loved the world this way: He gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. John 3:16*
 - b. So will you trust the promise, believe in its fulfillment in Jesus, and live your life for him?

TELL THE TRUTH!

Knight's Master Book of Illustrations says the wisdom of always being honest and telling the truth is underscored in the following story: "A boy, 12 years old, was the important witness in a lawsuit. One of the lawyers, after questioning him severely, asked, 'Your father has been telling you how to testify, hasn't he?' 'Yes,' said the boy. 'Now,' pursued the lawyer, 'just tell us how your father told you to testify.' 'Well,' replied the boy modestly, 'Father told me the lawyers would try to tangle me in my testimony; but if I would just be careful and tell the truth, I could say the same thing every time.'"

PREJUDICED WITNESS

In Marshall's book *Eternity Shut in a Span* is the story of a night watchman who was a in court. He had been on duty at a railway crossing on the night of an accident. A train had struck a car, resulting in serious injury to the occupants. No one else had seen the crash. The watchman testified that he had swung his lantern to warn the driver. The court found him blameless and placed the responsibility for the accident on the motorist. The watchman's friends immediately began to praise him for his faithfulness in waving the lamp. Greatly relieved by the verdict, he whispered to himself, "And all the time I was afraid they would ask me if the lantern was lit."

John 19:31-37

³¹The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high *day*), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. ³²The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; ³³but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; ³⁴but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. ³⁵And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. ³⁶For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN." ³⁷And again another Scripture says, "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED." [NASB]

1 John 5:5-12

⁵Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. ⁶This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. ⁹We accept man's testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. ¹⁰Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. ¹¹And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.