

**Serm. Series: “The Darkness and the Dawn”–Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN 4/2/03**

**Text: Luke 23: 44-46**

*“And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.”*

**Title: Not Afraid to Die**

**Introduction: Illus.: The Hands of God**

**Theme:** Throughout this Lenten season we have seen that when events were in the hands of sinners, the tragedy of the passion unfolded. Yet, when all was said and done the crucifixion ended with our salvation being in the hands of God which assures that we have a secure future, both now and eternally.

*Because of Jesus' death **OUR TIMES** are in God's hands*

- Jesus' life and death were in God's hand and plan
  1. Jesus set his course to walk to Jerusalem because he knew Father's purpose for his life.
  2. Jesus not afraid in Garden of Gethsemane to turn the course of events of next day (Gd Fri.) over to the Father's will because knew the **“joy set before him.”** (Heb. 12:2)
- **“My times are in Your (God's) hand.”** Psalm 31: 15a---what does that really mean?
  1. Same Psalm from which Jesus quoted (Psalm 31: 5)
  2. ILLUS.: Prudential national ad campaign: “The **GOD** hands people” (instead of the “good hands people”)
  3. **“For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.”** Romans 14: 7-8

*Because of Jesus the **END OF OUR TIME** can be in God's hands*

- Jesus could hand his soul into the Father's hand because the payment was complete
  1. Not rejected by the Father because sin remain (My God, why have you forsaken)
  2. Death held no sway because no more sin to punish
  3. *Then the end will come, when Jesus hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”* 1 Cor. 15: 24-26
- We can turn our life over to the Heavenly Father at our last breath because of Jesus
  1. Jesus' confidence can become our confidence
  2. *“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.”* John 10: 27-29
  3. *“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”* Rom 8:38-39
  4. **ILLS.: CHILD'S PRAYER: Now I lay me down to sleep; I pray the Lord my soul to keep; If I should die before I wake; I pray the Lord my soul to take; And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.**

## **Hand of God**

For years people have admired the art masterpiece known as "The Praying Hands." Behind this work of art is a fascinating story of love and sacrifice. In the late fifteenth century two struggling young art students, Albrecht Durer and Franz Knigstein, worked as laborers to earn money for their art studies. But the work was long and hard and it left them little time to study art. Finally they agreed to draw lots and let the loser support them both while the winner continued to study. Albrecht won. Durer went on to become a famous and much-reproduced artist. The self-sacrificing fellow student sank into obscurity. As Franz had worked at hard labor, his fingers had become twisted and stiff. His long, slender fingers and sensitive hands had been ruined for life. He could no longer manage the delicate brush strokes so necessary for executing fine paintings. Durer wished somehow to thank this comrade, this companion, this self-sacrificing friend. He decided to paint a picture of the hands that labored all these years on his behalf. These hands were now rough and calloused, and cracked with manual labor. And those hands have become famous across the world. The praying hands by Albrecht Durer.