

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE-10 April 2020

Theme: "I WILL BEAR YOUR DARK SIDE"

READINGS:EPHESIANS 2:1-5; John 3:16

INTRODUCTION

What would have happened to the Beast if the Beauty hadn't appeared? You know the story. There was a time when his face was handsome and his palace pleasant. But that was before the curse, before the shadows fell on the prince, before the shadows fell on the heart of the prince. And when the darkness fell, he hid. Secluded in his castle, he was left with glistening snout and curly tusks and a bad mood. But all that changed when the girl came. I wonder, what would have happened to the Beast if the Beauty hadn't appeared? Better yet, what would have happened if she hadn't cared? Who would blame her if she hadn't cared? But she did care. And because the Beauty loved the Beast, the Beast became more beautiful himself. The story's familiar, not just because it's a fairy tale. It's familiar because it reminds us of ourselves. There is a beast within each of us. It wasn't always so. There was a time when humanity's face was beautiful and the palace pleasant. But that was before the curse, before the shadow fell across the garden of Adam, before the shadow fell across the heart of Adam. And ever since the curse, we've been different. **Beastly, Ugly, defiant, Angry.** We do things we know we shouldn't do and wonder why we did them.

The ugly part of us or the beast often shows its face, when we behave like the world. **Have we behaved badly this last few weeks, last night or this morning, especially being lockdown?** There is a saying: “the devil makes work of idle hands-Ledigheid is die duiwel se se oorkussing” Moments later conviction surfaced and you ask yourself-“**Why did I do that?** I’m a typical calm guy or girl, but for 5 minutes I was a beast! Only two facts comforted me: “**One, I don’t have a fish symbol on my car,** and two, the apostle Paul had a similar struggle. “**I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do.”(Rom.7:15)** Ever felt like saying those words? If so, you’re in good company. Paul isn’t the only person in the Bible who wrestled the beast within. It is hard to find a page in Scripture where the animal doesn’t bare his teeth. King Saul chasing David with a spear. Shechem raping Dinah. Dinah’s brothers(the sons of Jacob) murdering Shechem and his friends. If the Bible is called the Good Book, it’s not because its people are, but blood runs freely through the stories as the ink through the quills that penned them. But the evil of the beast was never so raw as on the day Christ died. **The disciples were first fast asleep, then fast afoot. Herod wanted a show. Pilate wanted out. And the soldiers? They wanted blood. So they scourged Jesus. The legionnaire’s whip**

consisted of leather straps with lead balls on each end. His goal was singular:” **Beat the accused within an inch of his death and then stop.”** **39 lashes** were allowed but seldom needed. A centurion monitored the prisoner’s status. No doubt Jesus was near death when His hands were untied and he slumped to the ground. Though His back was ribboned with wounds, the soldiers loaded the crossbeam on Jesus’ shoulders and marched Him to the Place of a skull and executed Him. We don’t blame the soldiers for these two actions, they were just following orders.

The soldiers’ assignment was simple: “**Take the Nazarene to the hill and kill Him**, but they had another idea. They wanted to have some fun first. Strong, rested, armed soldiers encircled an exhausted, nearly dead, Galilean carpenter and beat up on Him. The scourging was commanded. The crucifixion was ordered. But who would draw pleasure out of spitting on a half –dead man? Spitting isn’t intended to hurt the body-it can’t. Spitting is intended to degrade the soul and humiliate the person and it does. What were the soldiers doing? Were they not elevating themselves at the expense of another? They felt big by making Christ look small.

Ever done that? Maybe you’ve never spit on anyone, but have you gossiped? Slandered? Have you ever raised your hand in anger or rolled your eyes in arrogance? Have you ever blasted your

high beams in someone's rear-view mirror? Ever made someone feel bad so you would feel good? That's what the soldiers did to Jesus. When you and I do the same, we do it to Jesus. **"I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brother and sisters, you were doing it to me!(Matt.25:40).** How we treat others is how we treat Jesus. We must face the fact that there is something beastly within each and every one of us. Something beastly that makes us do things that surprise even us. Haven't you surprised yourself? Haven't you reflected on an act and wondered, **"What got into me?"**

The Bible has a three-letter answer for that question: **SIN.** There is something bad-beastly-within each of us. We are **"by nature children of wrath" (Eph.2:3).** It is not that we can't do good. We do. It's just that we can't keep from doing bad. In theological terms, we are **"totally depraved."** Though made in God's image, we have fallen. David said, **"I was born a sinner-yes, from the moment my mother conceived me"(Psalm 51:5).** Could any of us say any less? Each one of us was born with tendency to sin. Scripture say it plainly: **"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned , everyone, to his own way.(Isa.53:6).** We were Beasts..

But there is indeed good news on this Good Friday-**"Christ came to bear our sins or as our**

theme says-He came to bear our dark side.” He decided to take the sins of the world on His shoulders so that we might gain forgiveness for our sins and a new and righteous relationship with the One True God through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The word "**borne**", comes from the Hebrew word "nasa". It means "**To lift up and bear away.**" As we go through life with our beast attitude and nature, there will be times when burdens and sorrows will abound, but Jesus has promised that He will lift our burdens from our shoulders. He has offered us a place of rest. A place we can flee to when the burdens of life get heavy and oppressive. That place is Himself - **1 Pet. 5:7-** "**Cast all your anxiety on Him, because he cares for you.**" There are times when the valleys seem to go on forever, times when the night never seems to end. Times when our load seems so heavy that we feel the next step will be our last. The good news is that these things will not last for ever, because the "**the Beauty-Christ has come to change the Beast within us to Beauty**". Circumstances and people and nature might make you believe that you are a beast, but the **Lord has come to bear your dark side and want to change you to this beautiful white Lilly.** Do you believe that? Remember today, now -Jesus is carrying out filth and our beast nature to the cross.

While we are still here, though, there will be trials and there will be burdens that we will have to endure. In those times, we have His faithful promise:- to get us through even the worst of times. **“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins...But because of his great love for us, God , who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved.(Eph.2:1, 4-5)**

From where the Lord sits, my need has already been met. He saw tomorrow while today was still tomorrow, and when today is yesterday, Jesus will still know all my tomorrows and will already have made provision for anything that I will face out there! Sometimes, God will lift our burdens away totally, other times, He decides to leave them in place. If He does this, you can rest assured that He will help to shoulder the load.

Conclusion: What are you "griefs and sorrows and beasts" this morning? There may not be a thing I can do for you, but I know Jesus can! What you need to do is bring your burdens to Him and cast them on His strong shoulders. He will lift away your burden and help shoulder the loads He decides to leave in place! You come and He will meet with you right now.

“When I survey the wondrous cross,
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing , so divine, Demand my soul, my life,
my all.

Amen.