

And Everyone's Callings Are Fulfilled

John 19: 17-30

Good Friday, 2016

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

And so Jesus goes out. He bears His own cross. He goes to the Place of the Skull. Whether the hill on which our Lord was crucified was shaped like a skull or not I will leave to historians to debate. It is clear though that Jesus was going to the place of death. If the Place of the Skull means anything it means the place of death. They crucify Jesus.

When they crucify Jesus, He fulfills His calling. God the Father had called Jesus to die on behalf of the world. He had called Jesus to give His flesh for the life of the world. He had called Jesus to make atonement for the world's sins. Jesus fulfills that calling. They crucify Him. Jesus came down out of heaven to do the Father's will and so He does it. He bleeds. He dies. His calling is fulfilled.

The two men who were crucified with Him fulfill their callings. As soon as one of them is crucified on the right hand of Jesus and one is crucified on the left hand of Jesus they fulfill their callings. The Father had called them to be crucified at His right and at His left. Our Lord Himself had told James and John that when He entered into His glory there would be one at His right and one at His left. Our Lord had also told James and John that the ones appointed to be on the right and left of Jesus when He entered His glory were appointed by the Father and not by Jesus Himself.

And so prior to our Lord's crucifixion, He says repeatedly to both Greeks and Jews and to His own heavenly Father that the hour had come for Him to enter into His glory. Jesus enters into His glory when He is crucified. He has to tell us this or we would miss it. He has to tell James and John this so that they are prepared for their deaths. He has to tell us this so that we will understand glory the way that glory is. Jesus is crucified and atones for the whole world's sins. The whole world now owes Jesus everything. We owe Him our eternal gratitude, thanks, and praise. We can never thank Him enough for what He has done for us. We can never fully understand all that He went through on our behalf. And that is the point. The point of His crucifixion is that we will never understand God's wrath. We will never understand everlasting damnation. He is dying on the cross and enduring God's wrath and damnation on our behalf. We now owe Him forever and what a glorious debt it is. The whole world owes Him forever and He draws them all to Himself. This is the crucifixion of our Lord. This is glory. And so the two criminals who were crucified with Him fulfill the callings that the Father gave them when they die, one on His right and one on His left with Jesus in the middle.

Pilate fulfills his calling. Remember Pilate is an agent of the state. He represents Roman authority in Judea. He is there at the behest of Caesar. He is there to replace Herod and control all of the unrest that Herod left behind. Remember that there is no governing authority except the ones which God has instituted. Therefore whoever rebels against the government is rebelling against what God has instituted. Therefore Pilate speaks for God. Pilate speaks for God in terms of justice and declarations. Even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself told Pilate that he would have no authority over Jesus if it were not given from above. Pilate had authority from God Himself. With that authority Pilate performed God's will and declared Jesus innocent and sentenced Jesus to death. What Pilate knew about what he was doing remains something of speculation to my mind. That Pilate did it is recorded in the Gospels.

And so Pilate fulfills the calling that God the Father gave to him by appointing a notice on the cross of Jesus. This notice labels Jesus. It says, "Jesus, the Nazarene, the King of the Jews."

God only promised one nation that it would become an eternal nation. That was the nation of Israel. God promised Israel that it would become an eternal nation when it had a king that would do

God's will whole and entire. Israel would become an eternal nation when it had a king who executes God's judgments in accord with God's will. When the nation becomes an eternal nation those people who belong to the nation are eternal also. Anyone who is not eternal is cut off from the nation of Israel because the nation of Israel is an eternal kingdom.

Therefore God appointed Pontius Pilate to be the governor of Judea. And with his authority given to him by God Pilate declares on behalf of God who the King of the Jews is. And Pilate maintains that Jesus is the King of the Jews in spite of opposition by the chief priests. Whether or not Pilate agreed with the theological assessment of Jesus' crucifixion or not remain unknown. What we do know is that what he had written, he had written.

The Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus fulfill their calling. They are first of all also agents of the state who on behalf of God the Father put Jesus to death. God the Father worked through those whom He had called to perform executions to do His will and put Jesus to death thereby atoning for the whole world's sins.

Then the soldiers fulfilled their specific calling as the soldiers who crucified Jesus. God the Father placed their calling into Psalm 22 where it stands written, "They divided my garments among themselves and for my clothing they cast lots." Even that small passage from the psalms stands fulfilled as the soldiers do exactly what God the Father called them to do through the psalm.

Our Lord fulfills all of His callings as we have seen. We have seen our Lord fulfill His calling as prophet and by doing so fulfill His callings of priest and king. He preaches God's word. He makes sure that He is offered for the sin of the whole world. By doing so He founds the everlasting kingdom and He is a permanent king.

But our Lord has other callings besides prophet, priest, and king. He is also a son. As a son He has holy obligations given to Him by His Father in heaven. One of those obligations is to care for His mother in the absence of Joseph. Presumably Joseph has passed away by now. In ancient times men were often much older than the women they married. Historically and even in our own day men die sooner than women do. And since our Lord does what He does at the cross, He confirms that Joseph is dead. He makes provision for the care of His mother. Whether or not Jesus has no other siblings to care for Mary and that is why He entrusts her to the disciple whom He loved or whether it is because His siblings were unavailable at the crucifixion for Him to entrust her to them, He gives her to the disciple whom He loved. I will let the historians figure out whether or not Jesus has other siblings. Suffice it to say that even while He is fulfilling His vocations of priest and king, He does not neglect His calling to be the son of Mary. He does not fail to heed the word of His heavenly Father given through Moses that even our Lord should honor His father and His mother. And so our Lord gives His mother to the disciple whom He loved and the disciple takes Mary into his own household. He provides for Mary after the death of her son. And so the Lord fulfills all of His callings even the calling to be the son of Mary.

And then one final detail. Jesus says, "I thirst." This is in fulfillment of Psalms 63 and 69 where the servant of God says that he thirsts. It would seem when you sing these psalms that such a detail surely could have been overlooked. Does Jesus really have to fulfill every last detail that the Father gave in the Old Testament? Surely the crucifixion itself is good enough to be the Savior of the world.

But our Lord does not go about things in this way. He fulfills the calling that His heavenly Father gave to Him and He does it in all of its detail right down to the sour wine that they gave Him to drink which Psalm 63 mentions.

And let us not forget the hyssop stalk that was used to lift the sponge to our Lord's lips. In Psalm 51 hyssop is the plant that purifies from sins. In the original Passover in Egypt hyssop was the plant used

to apply the lamb's blood to the doors of the Israelites marking their homes so that death would not enter their homes when God judged the gods of the Egyptians. Hyssop's appearance at the crucifixion of our Lord is the final confirmation from God the Father that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. You have been rescued from death.

All of the callings of the Lord have been fulfilled. All of callings of those around Him have been fulfilled. Salvation is completed. Jesus is dead. He returns the Spirit to the Father. And so it is appropriate that our Lord should say, "It is finished."

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.