Good Friday
Rolling Meadows - 1968

Rev. Carl F. Thrun

IN NOMINE JESU

Lamentations 1: 12 IS IT NOTHING TO YOU, ALL YOU WHO PASS BY? LOOK AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY SORROW LIKE MY SORROW WHICH WAS BROUGHT UPON ME, WHICH THE LORD INFLICTED ON THE DAY OF HIS FIERCE ANGER.

SORROW

Shortly before President Kennedy was assassinated a modern writer declared: Our world has finally come of age - we are on the verge of solving all our problems! The frightening years since then, and surely the events of this past week — they all cry out otherwise! Our world has NOT come of age. We may have made tremendous advances in science and technology - but the human heart is still black and evil and cursed with sin.

Last Tuesday I happened into a public place in our community. The subject of conversation was quite naturally the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Apparently the tradegy of his death and the sight of this widow with her small children hadn't touched many of those who had gathered. I got the feeling that they looked upon the whole affair as one big joke. "I never agreed with him anyway" - "What is all the big fuss about?" - "The world is just as well off without him" - "Look at how all those people are enjoying the publicity".....

Suddenly I didn't hear any more. My thoughts went back to long ago when another man spent his life going up and down the land he loved, calling to his people to repent and return to the Lord, their God. But nobody listened. And when it was all over, Jeremiah sat among the smoldering ruins of his homeland - pillaged, and plundered, and burned to the ground - and he wept; he cried like a baby: IS IT NOTHING TO YOU, ALL YOU WHO PASS BY? LOOK AND SEE IF THERE IS ANY SORROW LIKE MY SORROW WHICH WAS BROUGHT UPON ME, WHICH THE LORD INFLICTED ON THE DAY OF HIS FIERCE ANGER.

I thought of how God had heard the cry of Jeremiah - how He Himself came in to Person of His own dear and beloved Son to cry out in bitter lamentation - how HE WAS DESPISED AND REJECTED OF MEN; A MAN OF SORROWS AND ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF. Mocked and scorned, they held him in derision: IS NOT THIS JOSEPH'S SON, THE SON OF A CARPENTER? CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME OUT OF NAZARETH? The world, they were sure, would be better off without Him — so He was nailed to a cross — and the

taunting continued: IF YOU ARE THE SON OF GOD, WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS?

Let there be no mistake tonight about what it means to be a Christian and a follower of Christ. The road back to God is a road that is wet with tears, with suffering and sorrow. Ever since the ANGEL OF THE DRAWN SWORD closed the gates of Paradise lost before the terrified eyes of our first parents, the tides of time have surged with sorrow - a sorrow that reached its WORLD CLIMAX in the agony of the Garden and in the atoning blood of the Cross when the SUFFERING SERVANT of Jehovah cried: WAS THERE EVER SORROW LIKE UNTO MY SORROW?

Good Friday tells us that there is no escape from the burden of sin and death but by dying. There is no release from sorrow but by sorrow. There is no overcoming of suffering but by suffering. But here God Himself plunged right into the thick of our life and existence. Here God takes into Himself the suffering and the sorrow which our sins have brought upon us. The SUFFERING SERVANT bears the full fury of God's fierce anger - and WITH HIS STRIPES WE ARE HEALED! Every step of the way Christ is involved with each one of us!

This is GOOD Friday - and not just a dark, BAD, hopless Friday - because in His suffering, in His great sorrow, in His death, SIN, SUFFERING, DEATH, AND THE DEVIL have all been trodden underfoot. Death tried to swallow the one indigestible morsal - Death tried to embrace not just one who had life, but HIM WHO IS LIFE - and like the Great Fish that spit up Johah after three days, so Death had to spit Him up on the 3rd day. Victor And now there is HOPE - the surety that our tears and our sorrows Death will NOT have the last word, but that those who BELIEVE IN HIM WILL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE - and GOD SHALL WIPE ALL TEARS FROM THEIR EYES.

Yet, until that Final and Great Day comes, we must still bear the pain of suffering and sorrow. God has not called His people to comfort and ease. The fact is that in a world of sin, suffering, and death, God has called us TO LIVE WHERE WE ARE! Instead of a Messiah who came at the head of a conquering army, to overwhelm the enemies of His people - The Father sent a SUFFERING SERVANT.

Instead of an imperial nation, He sent out a SUFFERING CHURCH. His Church is no more exempt from the difficulties and hostilities and sorrows of the world than was Christ Himself.

that suffering

And God help us if we refuse to become involved in the world's need. God help us if we are ever content to just sit back smugly in our confortable homes and comfortable churches and let the world go by. God help us if ever we stop caring about people - or simply try to get out of our responsibilities with token tributes. Millions are dying! Millions are starving! Children all over the world - in Vietnam, Alabama, and Chicago - will grow up without a father - hungry, alone - taught violence and fear and hate all their lives - deprived of hope - and they will die for lack of care or love. And for every single one of them - as well as for every single one of us - the Savior suffered and bled and died - because He cared, because wants to give them and us the joy of everlasting life.

Strangely the call of Christ to discipleship fills the night air of another Good Friday. Are we listening? Pray God that we are! IF ANY ONE WOULD COME AFTER ME, LET HIM DENY HIMSELF AND TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME! Amen.