

*A Worship Service for Good Friday*

*John 19*

If you think for a moment about the song we've just sung and particularly about the title phrase, "Lamb of Glory," what you might quickly realize is that it all must sound like utter ridiculousness to anyone outside a Jewish or Christian heritage and world view. "What on earth could ever be the least bit glorious about a lamb...and why would anyone ever want to sing a song exalting one?"

The Church's behavior and our language on nights like this: it all must be very confusing to much of our world.

And yet what is not confusing to our world, especially after this last year, is the brokenness that exists here and under which we all suffer, to one degree or another. The world understands very well the sicknesses and heartaches and confusion that reign here – that attack our bodies, our relationships, our communities, and that attack more and more, it seems, as time goes on.

The world around us can certainly relate to all that, and as it does it's looking for explanations. It looks for answers.

The world looks for relief.

The world asks:

"Doesn't anyone know why the world is like it is?"

"Can anyone explain how this all came to be?"

"And, is there a way out of it – out of the hurt and grief and chaos?"

"Is there a way to make things right again?"

That's what the world wants to know.

And that's where the Lamb comes in.

For generations, God accepted the lambs of this world as offerings to Him for forgiveness. But none was ever good enough – no earthly lamb is perfect enough to pay for all of our mistakes – to pay for all of the sin of the world.

There was no lamb that could do it – until Jesus.

The Son of God – fully human and fully divine – born into a sinful world, yet without sin himself.

Jesus, and Jesus alone, was the sacrifice we needed – the Lamb who was given by God and for God – that the sin of the world could be forgiven, and that a new start could be possible – not just for a time, but for all time.

This is His story – the story of the Lamb of God and what He did to provide forgiveness, to provide a new start – for our broken world – and for you and for me.

Jesus is the sacrifice.

His is the blood that flowed to pay sin's price.

He is the heart of God's redemption of man, of woman, of creation, of His world.

So, we gather tonight remember His story – the story of salvation – and we gather to worship the Lamb of Glory.

*[Readings from John 19, interspersed with solos and congregational hymns, concluding with "Were You There?"]*

Were you there? Yes, you were, and so was I. We were there in the very heart and mind of Jesus.

He lived as He lived, suffered as He suffered, and died as He died – for us, all to the glory of God, His Father.

This is the story of the Lamb of God – the perfect sacrifice – who takes away the sin of the world.

And as we hear it in these days it should cause us to tremble, though not with fear, but with great gratitude and praise.

What wondrous love is this, indeed, what wondrous love is this?

We remember the Lamb of Glory, and we worship Him, as we wait together for His Resurrection Day.