**Thou answered not** ~ K. Schilder; Ambt-Vollenhove, Good Friday 1914

Text ~ **Psalm 22: 2**

NKJV *“Oh my God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.”*

NASV *“O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest.”*

Congregation:

Psalm 22 is the song of anxiety, the song of fear.

Whenever someone finds themselves in a state of anxiety they have need to express themselves. Like joy, anxiety is a matter of the heart, of our *feelings*. And feelings want to speak. They must communicate. They seek connection with another. And the greater the fear becomes, or the higher the joy, the more we are filled with one thought, which in the end represses all change.

So it is also here.

David, the author of this psalm, is anxious. The world falls upon him, strong, hostile powers pursue him like a deer on the mountains. Shouts of hostility disturb his ears. The earth stands ready to slay him. Terrors as from the grave present themselves to him. And in his great fear he looks about, whether the earth will help him, whether there is even one person who would stand with him.. But the earth does not answer. Therefore he looks up and begs *heaven* whether help would come from there. Whether his God would answer him. But.. Oh fearful anxiety, also heaven refuses to speak. His God also abandons him. That fills the cup of his suffering to the full. Thou my God, he cries out, do You no longer answer me? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Lord God, I call in the day, I call in the night. Everything I call, everything I say, is one great question. My God, Thou answered not! You let the world rage. Am I no longer Thy servant?

See, my God, the world, humanity storms upon me. The enemy, death, the grave is near. But Thou, Thou standest afar off.

See, my God, the world would have me lay in the vault of death. And dost Thou remain deaf to my complaint? Shall Thou not answer, not rescue?

No! heaven remains closed! Yes, and this is the great mystery, not only the world, but even Thou art against me! Man does not leave me in death, but Thou dost, Thyself. You lay me in the dust of death!

Congregation that is the soul’s cry of this psalm. David suffers. The grave opens at his feet.

Undoubtedly, during his life, David experienced moments when he could speak this way. It does not lead us to doubt that this psalm refers to one of those moments in his “eventful life”.

It is unknown to us when this song was composed. But it leaves no doubt in our believing minds

that he speaks from experience.

And yet you know that this psalm has a higher significance. Not only David suffers here, it is not only his sorrow that is expressed, also the Messiah of God is subject of this song. This hymn reaches for the future. It is prophetic of still greater anxiety. This also presents no doubt to the believing mind. Did not our Savior, while hanging from the cross… in darkness, mockery and curse.., take these words upon His lips? *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* Did not the mockery of the Pharisees say to the crucified Son of God what the psalmist had to hear according to verse 8? *He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!*

Did not Jesus have to see for Himself, what the poet encountered according to verse 18: *They divide My garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots!*

David, man of God, was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. Is it then any wonder that he is used by the Holy Spirit, perhaps without realizing it himself, to picture the Messiah of God in His highest agony, in His fearful, deadly oppression? Only one who has insight for the Messianic scope of this song can understand somewhat the depth of his words

Congregation, we are celebrating *Good Friday* today. Especially this afternoon (morning) we wish to see nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Congregation, you will understand my intentions, this afternoon (morning), if I look beyond David and only speak of Jesus Christ when discussing our text. A different explanation of the text is not warranted today.

Let us proclaim the *Lord’s* death this afternoon (morning).

He was *abandoned at the cross of God*. The world stormed at Him with its ridicule, its mockery. They laid Him in the dust of death. But also *God* laid Him in the dust of death. Just read verse 15. *Thou* hast brought me to the dust of death. And He called to God, but that same God Who had abandoned Him, refused to speak. And all the depths of His suffering, and all the terror of His abandonment comes to the fore in that vociferate and yet so tender complaint: *Thou answerest not*. Golgotha is the hill of struggle. God acts different than the world. This is the collision between heaven and earth.

The earth rages, raves, mocks ~ . Heaven is silent. The earth speaks ~. God is silent.

Humanity crucifies the Son of God. But He…, He finds no help with God. God lets Him die. God does not answer. The significance of that silence will become somewhat clearer to you, I hope, when I talk about:

The silence of God with the suffering of His Son;

1) as a testimony for all people,

2) to a hardening of the reprobate,

3) to a healing of the elect.

Or as well:

1) a silence by right,

2) a silence of wrath,

3) a silence of love.

**ONE**

In the first place, as I have said, we see in this silence of God a testimony for all people. The silent God reveals His justice here. He judges all the children of men, both elect and reprobate.

Our intention will become clear to you if you pause a moment and think about what is expounded here. What do you see? What you see is that God’s own Son hangs from the cross as one cursed. And what do you hear? This you hear, that God’s own Son complains, but receives no answer from the Father. Thou answerest not.

Thou answers not. Is there any greater discomfiture thinkable than this, one which is expressed by the words: Thou answers not?

Oh congregation, you can never plumb the depths of these words, otherwise you must stand still a moment with the thought, what it means that God will not answer man. Isn’t it the beginning of death when God refuses to speak; isn’t that the greatest depth of sorrow; isn’t that the porch of hell?

Do you know why? Because the greatest joy is actually found in that God speaks to man. Man has a mind for God; so he is religious from the ground up. Man only has complete happiness when he can speak with God and when God answers him. That is the joy of worship, the secret of religious joy.

Do you know what worship is? Worship is communion. Communion between God and man. This communion also expresses itself in words. As mutual relationships are expressed in human society by speaking, by the exchange of words, so also the communion between God and man reaches its climax when God and man speak to each other. And because God is the Almighty, and man the needy creature, therefore the conversation always takes a certain form, man asks and God answers. As long as this happens a blessed joy lives in the heart of man: here our rest is granted.

Therefore there is not a deeper sorrow nor a more draining unrest when especially God does not answer Him. Someone asks, asks continuously, and can therefore not do without an answer from God.

Do you want proof? Think of *Cain and Able*. Both sacrificed. God answered one of them and great was his joy. *God did not* answer the other (Cain), and unrest consumed him. Although distorted, even Cain’s act of murder had a religious angle. Already at the dawn of creation you see how frightful it was when God does not answer.

Well, it is not only clear in this situation that there is joy whenever God answers, and sorrow lives wherever the Almighty remains silent, all of Scripture is full of this idea.

For example in *Genesis 35: 3* Jacob knows of no better name for God than: *the God who answers me*. I will make an altar for this God who answers me.

In *1 Samuel 28: 15* Saul says to Samuel: I am sorely oppressed, for God is gone from me and does not answer.

Further in *Job 30: 20*: I cry out to Thee, but Thou dost not answer me.

In *Jeremiah 33: 3* we read: call to me and I will answer you. This is a wonderful promise!

Finally in *Micah 3:7* we read: *“so the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners abashed…, for there is no answer from God.”*

Enough, you know what we mean. It is a revelation of His wrath when God does not answer. A silent God is an angry God. This also applies *among people*. Nothing is more irritating or cause of sadness then when someone does not answer. Jesus Himself gave evidence of this. When the governor Pontius Pilate dared to torment Jesus with his shameless and at the same time innocuous questions then the accused Jesus proved His royalty by keeping *silent.* “He *answered* him not a word” , we read. Well, wait and let it penetrate for a moment; now Jesus Himself, who did not answer Pilate, receives no answer from the Father. *Thou answerest not!*

That was a thunderclap from a clear sky: the Psalms are all full of the petition: Hear us. And God always heard. He *answered*. But here: he did *not* answer.

Jesus speaks here *as man*. Even more so as the man of sorrow. He hangs on the cross. He thinks of the screaming injustice which the world renders to Him. There He feels the blood running past His face which had born the crown of thorns, running from the wounds of His hands and feet. There he hears the scorn of the shrieking crowd. Now He calls to the Father. He calls as a man. He calls without words. Father, wilt Thou stand for the injustice happening here? Wilt Thou, oh Judge, permit the injustice, which is carried out here? Could Thou be silent? Am I not Thy Son? Not Thy favorite? Dost Thy good pleasure not rest upon Me? Would Thou not speak, testify, give a sign, a miracle, heavenly Father?

The Father is silent. Indeed think for a moment of the wonders spoken by this silence.

At one time Moses was challenged in his official capacity by Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Then God did not keep silent. Here He does.

Once he answered Elijah with fire from heaven.

This same God, Who did maintain Moses honor, Who did testify for Elijah, does not stand up for the honor of His own Son!

Our comprehension stands quiet for a moment. Here we reach the deepest mystery. God abandons His own Son. The Son calls, the Father is silent.

That is a mystery! It is not to be understood by natural man. It is a stumbling block, foolishness for the world. The world pushes it aside. Nietzsche says: hideous. He considers it foolishness.

His objection is that God the Father sets Himself against the Son. So God versus God. Impossible he says. Folly. Unnatural, an earthly father would never do so.

Against this we say: it is not foolish.

For God does not set Himself against God. Jesus does not complain as *God,* but as *man*. He was abandoned by God as a *human being*. He was cursed as a human. As a *human being* He received no answer from God.

Never forget it. Only then can you understand the mystery of Golgotha. As true as it is, Jesus being abandoned by God as *man*, so it is also *impossible* that He would be abandoned as God. In all this silence there was also something going on between Jesus and the Father at Golgotha. God does not set Himself against God. The Father remains one with His son here.

But then; what Nietzsche did not understand, scripture tells you. Only then do you understand the silence of God, when you know and believe, that Jesus hangs on the cross as Mediator, as the *Guarantor*. He sets Himself *in place of sinful humanity*.

See, that is the great event here. When God silently turns away from His Son He does not see Him as His Son, but as Guarantor of the world. God sees Him burdened with the sins of humanity. God makes Him to be sin. Jesus stands in the place of others. Therefore God does not answer him. For He punishes sin in Him. When He is silent He shows His wrath against the sins of all mankind.

Here is the hour of judgment. God does not answer Jesus, but actually He does not answer mankind. This contempt is for humanity. For mankind this lofty majesty. God lets the outrage of the world strike Jesus Christ. He lets Him perish. In this He proves His holy justice. The silent God says that as this one dies, so every child of man must actually die. For they all have sinned and spurned the glory of God.

See, that is the talk that comes to you from the silent God. He does not prevent the death of His Son because He demands the death of sinful man. *The soul that sins shall die*, God had spoken. That threat is fulfilled here. God does not let His justice fail in the least. He demands retribution to the end. God gives no answer to the guilty ones. Yours and my sins are judged here. And that applies to *all people..*

Do you believe it? Then you must never forget that also your guilt is judged here as well.

Golgotha ~ hill of silence.

Golgotha ~ hill of darkness.

Golgotha ~ hill of no answers.

And when the sighing creature in its struggle calls toward this hill: oh God, deliver me from suffering, liberate us from death, oh God, do not leave us ~ then heaven remains shut and by His silence God asks: what communion does the holy have with the unholy?

There is no communion here ~ and therefore there is no word for the guilty world. The soul that sins shall die.

God has never spoken more clearly then when he kept silent at Golgotha’s tragedy.

**TWO**

Thus all men are judged. And all are condemned. Yet is there no glimmer of light in this pitch dark night? Does God remain silent? Is this the end?

No, it is not the end. God begins to make a difference. Everyone are initially condemned, yet now He begins to differentiate between elect and reprobate. We will see in the second place what this silence signifies to the reprobate. And it appears to be a silence that hardens them, and gives them up to God’s lasting anger.

When Jesus says: Thou answerest not, it means this: God does not deliver Him from His suffering, but lets the world go its own way. The world has a free hand.

Look congregation, this is why the hill of Golgotha is the center point of the world and its history. You see here the crisis of the age. There was a process of disease, and here it develops to its climax and highest revelation. Just as the moment comes when they say a patient reaches the crisis point, a moment that decides good or bad, and in which the disease reaches its greatest effect, so it is at Golgotha. There was a process going on in the world, the sickness of the lie, of godlessness, of revolution. The world disease reaches a crisis here. For God pulls Himself away for a moment. God is silent, does not answer. Now the world has a free hand. Now Satan has a free hand. And Satan does what he can to heighten the feverish zeal of the world and put Jesus Christ to death.

Thou answerest not. He does not answer His Son. The world sinned against the prophet-priest-king. God does not answer Him as *priest*, as *prophet,* as *king*.

God does not answer Him as *priest*. He had preached as priest among the people. Revealed the true religion. Had said that God must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. The people hanged that *priest* on the cross there. The world did not understand Him as priest. His religion was too high for them, too heartfelt, too deep. Will God answer now? (Will He) prove, that this crucified priest is according to the order of Melchezidak, rising above Aaron? God is silent. *Therefore* the world grabs the priest. Therefore it is Golgotha which now shows you the stage of the highest godlessness.

God does not answer Him as *prophet*. As a prophet Jesus had proclaimed a doctrine. That doctrine was the *truth*. And now the prophet of the truth hangs on the cross. The world smirks: where are you now with your doctrine, you prophet. Your doctrine was no truth, but a lie. Otherwise God would testify for you. But what does your God do? Does He testify, does He answer this prophet? Does He justify his teaching as the truth? God is silent. Therefore Golgotha is the scene of the greatest *lie*.

God does not answer Him as *king*. As king Jesus possessed might. Take it in for a moment; this powerless prisoner hanging on a cross needs to speak but one word and more than twelve legions of angels, heavenly spirits, would come and fight for him. But the world misjudges that might. It sneers: where is your kingly power, king of the Jews? You are not mighty, but we ~ Will God now prove that this king does posses more power than the world? God is silent. It is therefore that Golgotha presents the stage for the most insane revolution. These are the worst sins which the world can perpetrate - against, anti, irreligious, lies and revolution. Once the world has reached that point it rushes on all the more. There is no greater madness then that of godlessness. When it attacks a priest the world is inflamed to its greatest wrath . It rushes ever further on the washed out road as the lie blindfolds its eyes. When the revolutionary spirit takes hold of man ~ only God can intervene. Then man becomes as unrestrained as a hurricane.

Well congregation, take in the seriousness of Golgotha. God answers not. No sign comes down from heaven. Everything keeps it normal coarse. It appears that the world is the strongest.

Now the world has *also taken note of that*. The world also saw that God did not answer. And it has seen it consciously. For it has as it were challenged God and has defied the Almighty to answer. Also the world has posed the question in full awareness: Will God answer Him?

Eli - Eli - Lama - Sabacthani - let us see if Elijah comes. Whether heaven will open. But Elijah does not come and the world says: don’t you see.

Its boldness become ever more bizarre. Come down from the cross - he has saved others - save yourself - let God rescue you, if He would. - God does not answer. The world screams: don’t you see?

Or, would you want to hear the words of this same psalm: listen to the suffering Messiah complain in verses 8 and 9 himself. They shake their heads saying: He has throw it back upon the LORD, that He would help, that He would rescue because He had pleasure in him. But God does not help him out. He does not rescue His Son from the cross.

So the world maintains its overconfidence. God does not speak against it.

Do you ask now why God does not give a sign? Why He does not intervene. Was it possible?

This is why: God lets the world play its game to the very end. Congregation, here you find the highest sin of humanity. But you also find here the silence of God as the highest revelation of His wrath. God puts a lid over the face of the world here. God gives the whole world, that will not believe, that refuses to understand, over to its own sin. Here sin becomes the punishment and the punishment becomes the sin. Those terribly serious words: so that *“seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand, lest they repent and I heal them*” is fulfilled here.

Look, that is the awful seriousness of Golgotha. The world which yells and cheers there is *blind.* And God declines to open its eyes. The world which yells and cheers there is deaf. And God refuses to open its ears. It appears here that God is *with* the world and *against* Christ Jesus. But the reality is that the silent God is *against* the world and for Christ Jesus. For the world would not have it otherwise. Now God will not have it otherwise.

And do you ask if God is unjust? And do you say perhaps that God *could* have spoken?

Certainly, but you have to honor God’s *sovereignty* here. It is a terrible judgment when God gives man up to the judgment of hardheartedness; but yet: who are you oh man, that you would answer against God? Does He, the *potter*, not have the right to do what He wants with the clay? Would the creature say to the One who made it: why have You made me so? God is silent, and we have to be quiet.

But secondly, God is not *unjust.* He does not bring the world to sin. He does not prevent sin, nor He does *cause* and *perpetrate* it either. The world goes its own way. It had no *need* for sin. God had already spoken more often. Had He not given *testimony* of His Son on more than one occasion? At Christ‘s *baptism*: this is My beloved Son! By miracles. *With a voice from heaven*, John 12, it had sounded only a few days ago.

But humanity would not listen. Jesus Himself had said to the Pharisees: you will not come to me so that you would live. You always resist the Holy Spirit. In a cold-blooded way man himself had said: His blood come upon us.

Well, here is the end of God’s speaking. He gives the world over (to itself) and it keeps jubilating, screaming, mocking, laughing, scorning, not knowing that at that same moment a screech goes through the ranks of devils, who see that they could not overcome Jesus, but that others will yet become prey to the hellish powers (anyway). The world casts itself into destruction, by the judgment of hardening (in sin).

Still, congregation, unbelievers of our day always walk in the delusion that God’s Son was not the Son of God. They always say that God did not answer Him. If He had been God’s Son God would never have put up with man torturing Him. They remain by the cross and do not look up beyond the cross, they do not see the court of the resurrection behind the mound of the cross.

Also here the judgment of God proceeds. Jesus no longer walks on earth. That time has past.

That is one awesome truth! Thousands of the children of man meet eternal destruction because God will not speak to them *as they so choose.* The world will never change in this regard.

*At the cross the Jews cry out*: give us a sign and we will believe.

*But they condemn themselves* for they acknowledge that He has saved others.

*Today the world says:* give us a sign and we will believe.

*And God answers*: I will give you no sign, I ask for *faith first*! For an evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign and no sign will be given other than the sign of the prophet Jonah.

**THREE**

But is it only judgment and only wrath that this silence of God has to say to us ? Is there no speaking of grace and love to a questioning child of man?

God be thanked: the silence of God also speaks! And it speaks of love and grace. No, not everyone hardens themselves at the cross. God also shows the antithesis at the cross. Where the entire multitude screams in revolutionary madness there is still one who humbly bows the head and finds healing ~ and that is the murderer on the cross. And there is yet one who strikes himself on his chest in humility, who shuts off every revolutionary sigh ~ it is the centurion.

Well, congregation, that antithesis between hardening and healing, between reprobate and elect is permanent. Let us consider, finally, when we see how the silence of God at the suffering of His Son also serves to the *healing of His elect*, and is thus a *silence of love.*

Do you want to know how the love of God reveals itself, even when He is silent?

Well, just stop and ask the question what would have occurred if God had answered!

*If God had answered*, then: *Jesus would have come down from the cross*. Then: *the fourth word would have been spoken:* My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? But *not the sixth*: It is finished.

Then His blood would have flowed, but His death would not have followed. That was necessary for our salvation. For die He must, so that life would rise up for us out of His death.

Therefore if God had answered Jesus’ work would not have been complete. Then He could not be a complete Savior. Then we would remain in our sins. Then also those who had fallen asleep in Christ would be lost. He would have received an answer from God but we would never have heard any answer from God. Then the silence of God would have been eternal for us.

But now? But now? God did not answer. That is the sound of jubilation, calling to us:

God left everything to be paid to very end by His Son. God abandoned Him ~ so that we would nevermore be abandoned.

God let Him be mocked to the end by Satan, so that we would nevermore be mocked by him.

*Thou answerest not* complained the Son.

And therefore the Christian rejoices: *Thou dost answer.*

He underwent suffering to the end ~ we receive joy without end.

Now everything is restored!

Because there was something to restore. A break had been made in the relationship between God and man. That break was healed by Jesus. Had Jesus not suffered God could never have answered humanity. For man was sinful. God can have no relationship with the sinner.

*See, that* is the deadly seriousness of sin, it robs man of communion with God. Therefore God could not have answered man if Jesus had not suffered. Do you know why not?

*Answering requires questions. But man no longer asked.* He thought *I can exist on my own. I no longer have need of God.*

Sin is revolution. Revolutionary striving for autonomy. Humanity also intended to be autonomous.

Therefore no more *questions*. Therefore also no answer from God. Man was not only unworthy, but was also impossible to answer. The *bond of life* was broken. *A relationship no* longer existed.

So now, the cross has restored this relationship. The cross causes man to *ask* again. Man had first to come to the state where he learned to ask. The cross raises *questions*. It preaches guilt, poverty, death. Preaches the *wrath* of God *visibly.* The great *call sign of God*.

Well this call sign of God become man’s question mark. Man learns to know his sin. Learns to ask again, learns to pray again.

He prays: Lord, I lie in the midst of death. Is there life for me? ~ Lord I have nothing *but guilt*. Is there still forgiveness?

*Then comes the divine answer: even if your sins are like scarlet, I will make them whiter than snow.*

*Heaven answers again, and the earth now sings again:*

O bless the Lord, who pardons your transgression,

 Who heals your illnesses in His compassion….

 Bless Him who with His steadfast mercy crowns you,

Did you hear that, congregation? Here the silent God becomes the replying God. But you might ask: how can we know this? Did God make His answer public?

Yes, He has made very clear that He answered. For first He was silent before His Son and did not answer. That was at the cross. But God was not always silent. Later He did reply. On Easter morning. That was the joy of Good Friday. Good Friday did not remain. Nor did it remain unchanged at Jesus’ outcry.

Oh, there is a happy contrast between these two feast days. Good Friday is the day of silence. Easter morning the day of speaking.

Look, Jesus also knew this, he testified of it already on the cross.

Do you want to know when? Just remember the last word spoken on the cross: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. These words from the cross are the prophecy of Easter morning. For they are Jesus’ last words. When he dies He addresses His God as His Father.

At first He cried out: why hast Thou forgotten me?

Now He testifies: yet I am not abandoned. I commend my spirit to Thee.

First he cries: My God. Now He says: My Father.

The fourth word from the cross testified of *fearful sorrow*. The last of *joyful trust*.

The fourth word from the cross was a *prophecy of death.* ~ in contrast the last was a *prophecy of new life*.

The fourth word was a cry to a *silent God*. ~ the last was directed to a God *who will answer.*

That trust was not put to shame. The answer came on *Easter morn*. Then God spoke against the world. He, whom the world *killed*, God made *alive.* The world had said: God *abandons* Him. He is *not* God’s Son. God said: I do *not abandon Him*. He is God’s Son.

Well, then also the believers are raised with Him. Then they were also put in the right against Satan. Then they were alive again. Asking.

Then they received the joyful answer. The communion is restored. They are justified to all eternity.

This answer which the silent God gives the elect, will later be repeated publicly on the day of judgment. Then the roles will be reversed. At the cross no answer was forthcoming. It appeared that God was then against Jesus.

On the day of judgment an answer does come. Then it turns out that God is for Him. All the world shall see it. That will be the greatest triumph for the congregation. Then she will be glorified before God, angels, people. God will say: I did not answer My Son at the cross. I did not answer you either. But you are raised with Him and by His power you have again learned to call and ask. I give you the answer: a little while in My wrath and for all eternity in My love.

*(I have answered and saved you in your anxiety. Think of it in Psalm 34: 1)*

You ask for a word of application? Where would we begin and where would we end. Good Friday speaks of Jesus’ death ~ your whole life depends on it.

We will describe some of its main points.

First we have seen that all people have been judged by God’s silence. Did you sense that? Have you acknowledged and confessed your sin? Whoever does not approach Golgotha in this way may believe the history but not yet to salvation.

Then you can speak sentimentally about the cross, but you do not speak from faith. In our day many find the cross beautiful. *Rousseau,* that well known apostle of unbelief says: *Jesus died like a God*. There is amazement in those words, but no adoration. Another (Verhay) calls out: *Oh flame of passion* in a cold cosmos, how great a suffering beautifies your divine example. This is only fantasy, but not faith.

Do you have faith? Do you approach the cross with it? Examine yourself closely. Many claim to understand the cross and do not understand it.

The centurion cried out; ‘truly this man was righteous‘. This shows *homage*, and therefore only an expression of historical faith.

The crowds went home ’striking their breasts’, *an expression of emotion* and plainly only an expression of momentary faith.

The women followed Him to the cross; there existed a bond of love and that bond speaks without a doubt of saving faith.

This is how you must come, and you will not ask again like Nietzsche; how is it possible that God the Father did not answer His Son? But you will ask, with holy excitement, how is it possible that the Holy God does answer me, who is unholy.

This remains a mystery, but you must believe it. God says it Himself. The burden of sin lies as the basis of every question. God’s grace is the only answer to this question. Your guilt and sin explains everything.

Therefore it is the real application of Good Friday. Fall into the dust and say: Thou hast judged my rebellious words by Thy silence. But speak again, speak to me of peace. Answer my Lord, so I will answer Thee.

Or, secondly, do you perhaps still belong to the world if you have not come that far? A moment ago we mentioned that the *world did not understand the cross*. They said that He could *not* have been God’s Son. By this they hardened themselves.

What *do you* think? Did you understand that Jesus was still the Son of God, even though He did not answer Him? *You have eyes*: do you see? *You have ears*: do you hear?

The world said: You are no prophet. It sank into the lie. If you say: His is a prophet? You speak the truth, and indeed, everyone who is from the truth hears His voice. Follow Him.

The world says: He is no priest. It became faithless, godless, irreligious. Do you say *He is a priest*? Then only He can bring you to God. Follow Him.

The world claims He was no king, it became revolutionary. If you say He was a king anyway. Then all resistance breaks away from you. Then you are only a subject, follow Him.

What do you think of the Christ?

If you do not regard Him as prophet, priest or king, then you do exactly as the world does. Then you also taunt Him. Also you will stand by the cross and stare yourself blind at the cross. The unrepentant taunt Christ. And it will appear in the end that you have deceived yourself.

Are you unrepentant? Then you will not hear God answer unless you surrender yourself.

And thirdly, if you do not become hardened ~ then a great comfort comes to you from the silence of God at Golgotha. Then, because He has first made you ask, God will answer.

Has God already answered? Can you now testify That He who forsook Jesus will never forsake you?

Don’t you know that? Ask yourself it you have learned to ask.

You have to feel your emptiness, your lack, your shortcomings.

You must see your poverty. Then you have need for His riches. And God will pour out those riches to you.

Do you have Him now, do you miss Him now?

God *will answer you*. That answer first rings in your soul. It is an answer of tenderness. The Holy Spirit answers you when He makes you cry out: *Abba. Father.*

When a person calls God their Father, it is a sign that they have understood and heard God’s answer. It is a reflex of the love of God.

It is the human answer to God’s answer.

God says first: my child. Then man says: my Father. A sign that he has heard God’s voice. Later that answer becomes public. In this life it is not always heard so clearly.

In our time Golgotha often has only a small reflection . God sometimes still remains silent. He does not give an answer to every question.

Often it is like it was then. In appearances the world is too strong for us. Often we still have to suffer from Satan and the world. Sometimes everyday. Then they may call out: where is your God?

At such times we desire a direct answer, and cry out: Lord, give us a sign. Let the world see that Thou art on our side. And God often remains silent.

But do not doubt because we must follow Jesus. We must walk on His road. This is how it went with Him, and so it must happen also with (those who are) His, for the servant is not better than his Lord. And if such questions do remain unanswered, they will be answered: Mercy, Oh God, Mercy.

And that was answered, this is enough for our whole life. Too often we ask the small, and too often not the great. We must await God’s time. Later the answer will come. And that answer is the Day of the resurrection.

So now you are assured. You now go the same way as Jesus. Once He cried out the fourth word of the cross: *Why hast Thou forsaken Me*. Thou answerest not.

*Then after three days* there was the resurrection: Thou dost answer.

Between them lay the link: the seventh and last word of thee cross; *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.* Then came the death-sigh ~ it is finished.

It is also like this with us ~ we also often complain that He does not answer. Even though the world does not hear it. Still, our faith awaits the resurrection. Then all the answers to all questions will receive an answer so that the world will hear of it. In between lies a link: our death.

Also then we will say: Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit. That speaks of rest, faith, trust and hope. The difference and the similarity between our death and Jesus’ death will be seen in that hour.

This is the difference: He died on the cross as an accursed one. We die calmly and softly, as a blessed one.

He was forsaken by God, cast off from the people. We are going to God, surrounded by human love and looked after.

But the similarities are these: He died expecting the resurrection, we also die expecting the resurrection.

He died trustfully commending His soul into Father’s hand. We also die trustfully commending our soul in Father’s hand.

Then the earthly eye will break down but the heavenly eye will behold.

Angels bring you to meet Him. They whisper: God did not answer Him. For this and that reason.

Only, He did answer you. And when you pray your last prayer, God will hear you, and dying you will sing, whisper: *God have I loved, because this faithful Lord hears my voice, my pleading, my complaint. He inclines His ear. I called upon Him all my days. He granted help and rescued time and again.*

*Jesus covers my guilt before God.* God, who kept silent by the cross, will hear this petition saying Amen Himself.

At Golgotha it was: Thou answerest not.

In heaven it is: Thou hast answered, oh faithful God.

Amen.

Read: Psalm 22: 1-19 ; Text: Psalm 22: 2

Sing ~ Ps. 65: 2; Ps. 27: 2, 3; Ps. 22: 1, 3; Ps. 34: 1; Ps. 116: 1, 5 (BoP)