Luke 23:44-49 // Good Friday All-Age Service

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Preacher: Robbie Laidlaw

[0:00] Thanks, Amy, for reading. Good morning, everyone. My name's Robbie. If we've not met before,! It's so exciting to be together on Good Friday morning. I hope you had some fun with some crafts.

We've had a lot of nice cakes. What we're going to do for the next just under 10 minutes, we're going to spend some time together thinking about why are we here? What is Good Friday? What happens? What does it mean to us today? So stay where you are. You're going to listen with your ears.
You're going to sit still if you can, but don't worry. If you need to go to the back of the creche, that's okay. But we're going to think about what is Good Friday all about? I wonder if you've ever wanted to be somewhere, but there's been something in the way. It stopped you getting there.
Who likes going to the zoo? I like going to the zoo. You get to see all your favorite animals. Some of the animals are so cute that you really just want to kind of dive in there and give them a cuddle, don't you? I love seeing the meerkats at Edinburgh Zoo. You just want to give them a scratch. Maybe you want to pet the big fluffy bear. But really, between us and all of the animals is a big fence. It stops us getting close. Even if we really want to get in there, it stops us.
[1:14] Now, sometimes that might make us a little bit sad because we really want to get in there and say hi to a meerkat. But other times, it can be quite good for us, can't it? Getting close to some of these animals could be quite dangerous. I love lions. Lions are cool.

But I know if I got in and tried to give a lion a hug, it might not end very well for me because they have very sharp claws. Today, on Good Friday, we are thinking about a barrier that once stopped people getting somewhere they wanted to be, specifically a really big barrier. I wonder if you noticed when Amy was reading for us, if you heard about it. See, in the story, there was a really big curtain. Now, you might have noticed on this stage, there's a very interesting looking curtain.
See, this is our curtain. This is going to help us think about our big barrier today. I know what you're thinking. You're sitting there going, Robbie, it's a curtain. Who cares?
In the story, I heard it got ripped. I've taken down a curtain at home. Maybe by playing a bit rough, you've knocked it and you've maybe got in a little bit of trouble. Maybe. Well, this curtain, it's quite a big deal because it was a very big curtain. This very big curtain was 60 feet tall.
Everyone close your eyes. Can you imagine a double-decker bus? You know, the nice red ones in London. Okay, now imagine two double-decker buses and now put the two double-decker buses on top of each other. That's pretty high. That's how tall this curtain was. It probably reached up to the roof. It was very big. This is not a curtain that's going to fall down by mistake, but this curtain tore in two. Luke tells us that when Jesus died, this curtain tore in two. This curtain was in the temple, right? And it's a pretty special curtain. It's not just a nice one. It's not just, it doesn't just look good. It serves a purpose. Remember I was talking about the lions? The fences around the lion's enclosure keeps us out because it might be dangerous to get too near the lions. Well, this curtain, or this representation of the curtain, is keeping us safe from something, from someone that could be very dangerous. This curtain stopped people getting close to God. Now, that might sound weird, doesn't it? When we talk about God, we talk about how loving he is and how kind he is and how we can approach him. And those are good things to remember, but we also need to remember God, he is perfect and holy. He is so holy and he is so perfect that if anyone who is not holy and not perfect got near to him, his perfect holiness might end up hurting them. It might kill them.
[4:13] So God put up this giant curtain to stop people getting too close to him by mistake. It was in the temple. That was where he lived. So when someone looks at the curtain, just look at our lovely curtain, when they stood in lieu to this very, very tall curtain, they would go, man, I really want to be close to God, but I know that I'm not perfect. I know I've got a sin problem. The curtain tells us

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that only perfect people are allowed with God. Only perfect people can go through the curtain because if you're not perfect and you go through the curtain, it's going to end badly for us.

No matter how hard we try, no matter how good we try and be, we will never get to go through the curtain on our own. But God, he really wanted to be with his people. He wants to be with us.
So the curtain was only ever a temporary plan. It was only ever a small thing until someone came to deal with our sin problem. You see, to get through the curtain, only perfect people are allowed.
So God sent a perfect person. He sent Jesus. Jesus was amazing. He never said anything bad. He never thought anything bad. He never hurt anyone around him. He was totally perfect.
But even though Jesus was totally perfect, he still chose to die for us. He died a criminal's death, the death of someone who had done wrong to help us with our sin problem.
[5:53] Our sins stopped us getting through the curtain. It stopped us getting close to God's. But Jesus' death took all of our sins away. And so now, because we have no sins, we are perfect.

And because we're perfect, it means we can go through the curtain without being afraid. We get to be with God forever and enjoy all the goodness he's got for us.
Josh, could you come give me a hand here? We're going to do something. Right? So because Jesus died to sort our sin problem, this curtain doesn't need to be here anymore. This is why, we're going to hope this works, when Jesus died, the curtain tore in two.
No, no, no, don't need to clap. You don't need to clap. There's a pre-tier. We cheated. But what this means is, so when we first looked at the curtain altogether, we saw we couldn't get through there. But now, because Jesus has died, the curtain is in two and it's made a doorway. We can access, we can get to God, we can know him just like he wanted to, because this curtain is torn in two.
Before Jesus came, we could not go through the curtain, because we had a giant sin problem, which needed a giant curtain. But now that curtain is gone, and we can get access to all of God's goodness and love and kindness, which is represented by some Maltese or eggs that I'm going to share at the end.
[7:24] Now, it can be really easy to think. It can be really easy for us to think that actually God doesn't want to be with us. Maybe we remember all the things we've done wrong, the people we've hurt, the times we've shouted at our parents in anger, where we've hit someone in school, or maybe we've just realized that we're not living life God's way.

If you're a Christian and you're here today, this torn curtain is a great comfort. God has separated it in two. He's never going to sew it back together again. There is never going to be a point where he's going to make you stand outside on your own.
God will never leave you, and never again will he count your sin against you. God is with you now and forever, because Jesus died. Maybe you're not a friend of Jesus yet.
You've been brought here by some friends, or maybe you just want to come and enjoy some Easter festivities. Well, this sin problem, it's real. Maybe you feel that inside, or maybe you just actually really want to try and get close to God.
Well, God has showed us that he is holy and perfect and can be dangerous if we get too close. We can never try or do anything ourselves to get close, but because of Jesus' death, there is no curtain, and we can walk straight through to him.
[8:50] He loves you and wants you to be with him forever. And the good news for all of us is we can be with him forever. There is no curtain. Jesus has died to bring you close to him forever.

All we need to do is say, God, I do have a sin problem, and I trust that Jesus has died for me. So the perfect response of what we're going to spend the rest of our time doing is turning away from sin, turning back to God, and giving thanks to the curtain is torn in two.
Jesus' death has made a way for us to be with God. We didn't deserve it. We have not earned it, but God has given it to us anyway. Praise God. I'm going to pray, and then we're going to move on to the next part of our service, which is a song.
Yeah, great. So boys and girls, who remembers how we pray? Everybody reach out really wide. We're going to put our hands out wide. Hands out wide. We clap above our heads. And we're going to do past our eyes. We're going to close our eyes. Past our mouth.
Close our mouths. And we're going to bow our heads, and we're going to pray to God. Loving Heavenly Father, thank you so much for your kindness in sending Jesus for us.
[9:57] Help us to remember that his death has torn the curtain in two, and we can enjoy your presence forever and ever. Lord, we know we struggle with sin, but help us to believe that your son

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died to forgive us sins.
Help us this Easter weekend to rejoice in that good news. Amen.

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