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Bulletin for the 1st Mid-Week Lenten Service

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PSALM: Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person! The LORD will rescue him in the day of trouble.

The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be called fortunate in the land. Do not surrender him to what enemies want!

The LORD will support him on his sickbed. When he is ill, You will transform all his bedridden condition.

I myself have been saying: "O LORD, be gracious to me! Heal my soul! For I have been sinning against You."

My enemies are asking maliciously about me: "When will he die, and when will his name disappear?"

When one of them comes to visit me, he speaks what is worthless. His heart gathers what is evil. Then he goes outside and talks about it.

All who hate me are whispering together about me. They are planning harm for me and saying, "A devilish disease is being poured out for him. He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down."

Even My close friend, whom I trust, who has been eating My bread, has lifted up his heel against Me.

Nevertheless, You, O LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up, that I may repay them!

In this way I know that You take pleasure in me, that my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.

However, as for me, You have firmly grasped me in my integrity and You will set me in Your presence for ever.

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

Psalm 41

COLLECT: Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts, that, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

1st Reading: Joel 2:12-19

¹² “Nevertheless, even now,” declares the LORD, “return to Me with all your hearts, with fasting, with weeping and with mourning! ¹³ Tear your hearts and not your clothes!”

Return to the LORD, your God! For He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in mercy and relents from sending calamity. ¹⁴ Who knows whether He may turn back, relent and leave a blessing behind Him, a grain-offering and a drink-offering for the LORD, your God? ¹⁵ Blow a trumpet in Zion! Announce a holy fast! Call an assembly! ¹⁶ Gather the people! Consecrate the congregation! Assemble the aged people! Gather the children, even the breast-fed infants! Let the bridegroom leave his bedroom, and let the bride leave her bridal chamber! ¹⁷ Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the Temple-porch and the altar! Let them say, “Look compassionately on Your people, O LORD! Do not make Your inheritance a disgrace and a byword among the nations! Why should people ask among the nations, ‘Where is their God?’”

¹⁸ Then the LORD became deeply devoted to His land and took pity on His people. ¹⁹ The LORD answered His people: “Look! I am sending you grain, new wine and olive-oil. They will satisfy you. I shall not make you an object of scorn among the nations any longer.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ Drawn from All Four Gospels

Portions selected from Matthew 26:15-27:66, Mark 14:12-15:47, Luke 22:7-23:56, and John 13:1-19:42, arranged chronologically to tell the story of the arrest, trials, suffering, crucifixion, death, and burial of our Lord Jesus.

Events occur on Thursday and Friday, 13-14 Nissan (April 2-3), 33AD, in and around Jerusalem.

Preparation for the Passover

Into Jerusalem

LUKE 22:7 Then the day of Unleavened Bread came, when the Passover lamb had to be killed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it!”

⁹ They asked Him, “Where do You want us to prepare it?”

¹⁰ He told them, “Look! When you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters! ¹¹ You shall tell the owner of the house: ‘The Teacher asks you, “Where is the guest room, that I may

eat the Passover in it with My disciples?”!’¹² He will show you a large, furnished room upstairs. Prepare for it there!”

¹³ They went, found it as He had told them and prepared the Passover.

Washing the Disciples Feet

Jerusalem, Upper Room

JOHN 13:1 Before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to leave this world and go to the Father. He had loved His own who were in the world and loved them completely.² The evening meal was being served, and the Devil had already put the idea of betraying Jesus into the mind of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put everything into His hands and that He had come from God and was going back to God.⁴ Jesus rose from the meal, laid aside His outer garments, took a towel and tied it around His waist.⁵ Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel that He had wrapped around Him.⁶ When He came to Simon Peter, Peter asked Him, “Lord, are You going to wash my feet?”

⁷ Jesus answered him, “You do not understand now what I am doing but later you will know.”

⁸ Peter told Him. “You will assuredly never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered him, “If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.”

⁹ Simon Peter told Him, “Lord, not only my feet but also my hands and my head!”

¹⁰ Jesus told him, “The person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet. He is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you.”

¹¹ For He knew who would betray Him. That was why He said, “Not all of you are clean.”

¹² After He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments, He reclined at the table again. He asked them, “Do you know what I have done to you?”¹³ You call Me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and you are right, because I am.¹⁴ Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet!¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.¹⁶ Truly, truly, I tell you, a slave is not greater than his master is, and one who is sent is not greater than the one who has sent him.¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them!¹⁸ I am not talking about all of you. I know those whom I have chosen. Nevertheless, let the Scripture be fulfilled that says: ‘He who eats My bread has lifted up his heel against Me’!¹⁹ From now on I am telling you these things before they happen so that, when they happen, you may believe that I am He.²⁰ Truly, truly, I tell you, the person who receives anyone whom I send receives Me, and the person who receives Me receives Him who has sent Me.”

The Lord's Supper

MATTHEW 26:20 When evening had come, He was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

²¹ While they were eating, He said, "Truly, I tell you that one of you will betray Me."

²² They were very sad, and each one of them began to ask Him, "I am not the one, am I, Lord?"

²³ Jesus answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the bowl with Me is the one who will betray Me. ²⁴ The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures have said about Him, but how terrible for that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born."

²⁵ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, asked, "I am not the one, am I, Rabbi?"

Jesus told him, "You have said that." LUKE 22:14 When the hour had come, He and the apostles reclined at the table. ¹⁵ He told them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I shall certainly not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷ Then He took a cup, gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves! ¹⁸ For I tell you, from now on I shall certainly not drink what comes from the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

MATTHEW 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread and gave thanks. He broke it, gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat! This is My body."

²⁷ He took a cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you!

²⁸ For this is My blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ For I tell you, I shall certainly not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it with you anew in My Father's kingdom."

Jesus Foretells His Betrayal

John 13:21 After He had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit. He testified, "Truly, truly, I tell you, one of you will betray Me."

²² The disciples began to look at one another, at a loss to know whom Jesus meant.

²³ One of His disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at table close to Him. ²⁴ Therefore, Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus which one He meant.

²⁵ Leaning back so that he was against Jesus' chest, he asked Him, "Lord, who is it?"

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I shall give the piece of bread when I have dipped it."

Then He dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

²⁷ After Judas had taken the piece of bread, Satan entered him. So, Jesus told him, "Do quickly what you are doing!"

²⁸ None of those who were reclining at the table knew why Jesus had said this to him. ²⁹ For, since Judas had the moneybag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy the things that we need for the feast!” or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ After Judas had taken the piece of bread, he immediately went outside. It was night.

Two Swords

LUKE 22:35 Then Jesus asked them, “When I sent you out without a purse or a bag or sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?”

They answered, “Nothing!”

³⁶ He told them, “However, now the person who has a purse should take it and a bag too! The person who does not have a sword should sell his garment and buy one! ³⁷ For I tell you that this passage of Scripture must be fulfilled in Me, ‘He was numbered with transgressors.’ Yes, what has been written about Me is being fulfilled.”

³⁸ The disciples said, “Lord, look! Here are two swords.”

He told them, “That is enough.”

M: Here ends the reading.

MUTUAL CONSIDERATION Sermon for Ash Wednesday 2024 Psalm 41:1-2

Grace and peace to you all from our risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The text for our sermon tonight is Psalm 41:1-2: **Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person! The LORD will rescue him in the day of trouble.**

² The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be called fortunate in the land. Do not surrender him to what enemies want!

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

As we begin another Lenten season, Psalm 41, authored by the Holy Spirit - written by David - is going to be the focus of our attention over the coming weeks. Tonight, we begin with the first two verses where we shall see that these words from David are like a man who has painted a portrait of his friend, and then the two switch places so his friend may paint a portrait of him. Here is what I mean:

David begins by saying, **“Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person!”**

The words **“pays close attention”** can also mean “focuses upon” or “thinks about intently.” When you paint someone’s portrait, you must first look intently at that person, studying his or her features very closely. So, when David said, **“Blessed is the**

one who pays close attention,” *he was talking about someone who gives careful, attentive thought to something.*

It would appear that David spoke these words in the singular and not in the plural. **“Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person.”** If David wished to speak in the plural, he could have easily said, *“Blessed is everyone who considers anyone who is poor.”* Yet David did not say that. He wrote in the singular on purpose because His words boil the entire world down to only two people. Who are those two people? ***You are one of them, and Jesus is the other.*** That is the entire point of tonight’s sermon. You and Jesus are like a person who paints a portrait of a friend and then switches places so the friend can paint a portrait of the person.

Jesus is the poor person you will be eternally blessed to consider, focus upon, and always bear in mind. The Apostle Paul says of Jesus, *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor...”* (2 Cor. 8:9a). Immeasurably rich before His incarnation, Jesus became the poorest of the poor as He submitted to the Law and fell victim to its curse, a process that ended in naked destitution on the cross. Jesus, the God-man, swapped places with us, making us rich. That is why the writer of Hebrews encourages us to look *“to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith”* (Hebrews 12:2). But *you* are also the poor person whom Christ Jesus, our Lord, carefully considered, bore in mind, acted on behalf of, and was declared blessed for it. Paul continues by saying, *“so that you by His poverty might become rich”* (2 Cor. 8:9b). Jesus said in the Book of Revelation, *“I know your tribulation and your poverty”* (Revelation 2:9).

It sounds strange that you and Jesus are both the poor person and that both of you are the person who will be blessed for considering the poor, so here is why that strange thing is true:

In one way or another, all of God’s Psalms - including Psalm 41 - speak about our Lord and His work of salvation on our behalf. Just before His ascension back into heaven, Jesus told the disciples, *“These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled”* (Luke 24:44). That is why God included the Psalms in His Scriptures. They bear witness to Him.

Because the Psalms are about Jesus, they are also about you and I. After all, we have been baptised into Christ. When we were baptised, we were baptised into Christ’s death and resurrection.¹ New life has been given – everything needed to make a new life for us has been completed. The Lord has joined Himself to us. When we were baptised, the Lord’s perfection became ours, and He carried the burden of our sins.²

¹ Romans 6:3-5

² 1 Peter 2:24

His strength became ours, and our weakness became His.³ His life became ours, and our death became His. A blessed exchange!

The words of the Scriptures that speak about us became applicable to Jesus, and the words that speak about Jesus became applicable to us. Because we are “*partakers of the divine nature*,” as Peter says (2 Peter 1:4), God dwells with us through His Holy Spirit - every Scripture passage about Jesus is also about us. With Jesus, we love what our heavenly Father loves, hate what He hates, share His work and His joy, and share and approve of His righteous judgments.

Your inseparable, eternal, baptismal unity with Christ is why Jesus is the poor person whom you will be blessed to consider *and* why you are the poor person whom Jesus likewise considered. Psalm 41 speaks of mutual consideration: “**Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person!**” Those words are like a person who painted a portrait of a friend, then the two switched places, and the friend painted a portrait of the person. You and Jesus are those friends.

Mark writes in his Gospel that Jesus began to teach that the Son of Man must “*suffer many things . . . be killed, and after three days rise again*” (Mark 8:31). Why did Jesus give Himself over like this? Because He always “**pays close attention to the poor person!**” It is elsewhere written, “*He does not forget the cry of the afflicted*” (Psalm 9:12); Again, “*The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears toward their cry*” (Psalm 34:15); and “*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles*” (Psalm 34:6). All these passages describe our Lord’s consideration toward you, His “poor” one.

What keywords do the Scriptures use to describe the nature of our Lord’s consideration toward you and I? It uses such words as *grace, mercy, compassion, and pity*. The Apostle Peter stood up at the council in Jerusalem and stated, “*We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus*” (Acts 15:11). Jesus’ half-brother Jude wrote how we are “*waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life*” (Jude 1:21). The prophet Micah said that the Lord “*will again have compassion on us*” (Micah 7:19). Moved with *pity*, [Jesus] stretched out His hand and healed the leper in Mark chapter 1 (v.41).

So Jesus is the blessed one who considers the poor person. In Psalm 41, David prophesied the great blessing and reward that Jesus received precisely because He “**pays close attention to the poor person**” and Isaiah says that Jesus would even pour out “*His soul to death*” (Isaiah 53:12).

David says, “**The LORD will rescue him in the day of trouble. ² The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive, and he will be called fortunate in the land. Do not surrender him to what enemies want!**”

³ 2 Corinthians 12:9

Those are the words of the *resurrection*, the words of eternal life.⁴ Because Jesus has considered our poverty - paying attention to us, focusing upon us, and thinking intently about our needs - because Jesus has considered our poverty, God the Father has “*raised Him from the dead and given Him glory*” (1 Peter 1:21). When David wrote “**The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive,**” we can easily think of how God the Father so completely and profoundly raised Jesus from the dead.

The resurrection of our Lord also indicates that the heavenly Father *did not* give Jesus up “**to what enemies want.**” Rather, through His death and resurrection, Jesus gained eternal victory over every enemy.

Thus, Jesus is indeed blessed - and is called blessed in the land of eternal life - precisely because He “**pays close attention to the poor person.**”

Now, switch places with Jesus and paint a portrait of your friend Jesus, as it were: Jesus is the poor man whom you will be eternally blessed to consider, focus upon, and always bear in mind. Paul writes, “*You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor*” (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus says, “*Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head*” (Matthew 8:20). He borrowed a bed at His birth (Luke 2:7) and borrowed a bed at His death (Matthew 27:59-60), and “*did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself*” (Philippians 2:6-7).

“**Blessed is the one who pays close attention to the poor person!**” What keywords do the Scriptures use to describe the nature of your consideration - your faithful paying attention - toward Jesus? They use such words as *trust*, *hope*, and *faith*. Psalm 20:7 says, “*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God*” (Psalm 20:7). The Apostle Paul writes, “Hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5), and again, “*The life I now live in the flesh I live in faith in the Son of God, who loved me and given Himself for me*” (Galatians 2:20).

Dear friends, you and I shall be counted among the blessed when we consider the poverty of our Lord Jesus, just as surely as Jesus Himself was blessed because He considered our poverty. That is the promise of God, spoken through David. As we begin our journey through this Lenten Season, let us always bear in mind the wonderful, life-giving result of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We truly have been blessed and made rich in every possible way by the love and compassion the true God has for us. May the Lord guide us with His love through this Lenten Season. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

⁴ John 6:68