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Bulletin for the 4th mid-week Lenten Service

HYMNS: 53 55 part 1 60 48 v.3

PSALM: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from saving Me, from the Words of My groaning?

O My God, I cry out by day, but You do not answer, and by night I am not silent.

Nevertheless, You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in You. They trusted, and You delivered them.

They cried to You and were rescued. They trusted in You and were not ashamed.

However, I am a worm and not a man, scorned by human beings and despised by the people.

All those who see Me ridicule Me. They open their lips wide. They shake their heads, saying, "Commit it to the LORD! Let Him rescue Him! Let Him deliver Him! For He takes pleasure in Him."

Nevertheless, You are the One who brought Me out of the womb, the One who made Me trust while on My mother's breasts.

I have been cast on You from the womb. From My mother's womb You have been My God.

Do not be far from Me! For trouble is near, for there is no one to help.

Many bulls have surrounded Me. Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me.

They have opened their mouths against Me like a mangling and roaring lion.

I have been poured out like water, and all My bones have separated from each other.

My heart has become like wax. It has melted inside my chest.

My strength has dried up like baked clay. My tongue clings to My palate, and You are putting Me on the dust of death.

For dogs have surrounded Me. A gang of evil-doers has encircled Me. Like a lion they have pierced My hands and My feet.

I can count all My bones. People look and stare at Me.

They divide My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.

However, You, O LORD, do not be far away! O My Strength, come quickly to help Me!

Rescue My soul from the sword! Rescue My lonely soul from the power of the dog!

Save Me from the lion's mouth! You have answered Me from the horns of wild oxen.

Let Me declare Your name to My brothers! I shall praise You amid the assembly.

You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him! Be afraid of Him, all you descendants of Israel!

For He has not despised or detested the misery of the Wretched One or hidden His face from Him. Rather, when He cried to Him for help, He heard.

My praise comes from You in the great assembly. I shall fulfil My vows in the presence of those who fear Him.

Humble people will eat and be satisfied. Those who look for the LORD will praise Him.

May your hearts live for ever!

All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD. All the families of the nations will worship before You.

For the kingship belongs to the LORD, and He rules over the nations.

All the prosperous people of the earth have been eating and worshipping. All those who go down to the dust will kneel before Him, even the one who could not keep himself alive.

Descendants will serve Him. The coming generation will be told about the Lord.

They will come and tell about His righteousness to a people yet to be born. For He has accomplished it.

Psalm 22

COLLECT: Lord Jesus, You bring light to those who dwell in darkness and make Your love known to them. Do not enter into judgment with Your servants, but strengthen us in the saving faith and guide us into the land of perfect peace where with the Father and the Holy Spirit You live and reign, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

SERMON: Psalm 41:5 Soon and Never

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

1st Reading: Zechariah 13:1-9

On that day a fountain against sin and uncleanness will be opened for the family of David and those who live in Jerusalem.

² “On that day,” declares the LORD of hosts, “I shall cut off the names of the idols from the land, so that they will not be remembered any longer. I shall also remove the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land.”

³ If anyone prophesies again, his father and his mother, who gave birth to him, will tell him, “You shall not live! For you have told lies in the name of the LORD.”

His father and mother, who gave birth to him, will pierce him through when he prophesies.

⁴ On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies. They will not put on garments made of hair to deceive. ⁵ However, he will say, “I am not a prophet. I till the soil, because a man bought me when I was a child.” ⁶ If someone asks him, “What are these wounds on your shoulders?” he will say, “They come from when I was beaten at the house of my friends.”

⁷ “Awake, sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Associate,” declares the LORD of hosts. “Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered. I shall also turn My hand against the little ones. ⁸ In the whole land,” declares the LORD, “two-thirds will be cut off and perish, but the one third will be left in it. ⁹ I shall bring this third into the fire and refine them as silver is refined. I shall test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I Myself shall answer them. I shall say, ‘They are My people.’ They will also say, ‘The LORD is my 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.

Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

Garden of Gethsemane, Mt Olives (outside Jerusalem)

MARK 14:32 Then they came to a place that had the name “Gethsemane,” and Jesus told His disciples, “Sit down here while I pray!”

³³ He took Peter, James and John with Him and began to be deeply distressed and troubled. ³⁴ He told them, “My soul is very sad, to the point of death. Remain here and be watchful!”

³⁵ He went forward a little, fell to the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. ³⁶ He was saying, “Abba! Father! All things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me! Nevertheless, not what I want but what You want!”

LUKE 22:43 An angel appeared to Him from heaven and strengthened Him. ⁴⁴ He began to be in anguish and prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like clots of blood falling to the ground.

MARK 14:37 Then He came and found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not be watchful for one hour? ³⁸ Be watchful and pray, that you may not begin to be tempted! The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

³⁹ Then He went away again and prayed, saying the same words. ⁴⁰ He came again and found them sleeping. For their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer Him. ⁴¹ Then He came a third time and asked them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough. The hour has come. Look! The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴² Get up! Let us go! Look! The one who is betraying Me has arrived.”

Jesus Betrayed and Arrested

JOHN 18:1 After Jesus had said this, He went out with His disciples to the other side of the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden. He and His disciples went into it.

² Judas, who was betraying Him, also knew the place, because Jesus had often been meeting there with His disciples. ³ Then Judas took the troop of soldiers and assistants from the Chief Priests and Pharisees and came there with lanterns, torches and weapons.

MATTHEW 26:47 While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd from the Chief Priests and elders of the people. They were carrying swords and clubs. ⁴⁸ The betrayer had given them a signal. He said, “The One whom I kiss is the Man. Arrest Him!”

⁴⁹ Judas at once went up to Jesus, said, “Greetings, Rabbi,” and kissed Him.

⁵⁰ Jesus told him, “Friend, do what you have come for!”

JOHN 18:4 Therefore, Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went out and asked them, “For whom are you looking?”

⁵ They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Jesus told them, “I am He.”

Judas, who was betraying Him, was also standing with them. ⁶ When Jesus told them, “I am He,” they went backwards and fell to the ground.

⁷ Therefore, Jesus asked them again, “For whom are you looking?”

They said, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

⁸ Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if I am the One for whom you are looking, let these men go!”

⁹ This happened that the statement that He had made might be fulfilled: “I have not lost any of those whom You have given Me.”

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the High Priest’s slave and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus.

¹¹ Jesus told Peter, “Put your sword into its scabbard! Shall I not indeed drink the cup that My Father has given Me?” MATTHEW 26:52B For all who take the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot call on My Father, so that He will at once provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How, then, are the Scriptures to be fulfilled, which say that it must happen in this way?”

⁵⁵ At that time Jesus asked the crowd, “Have you come out to arrest Me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? Every day I have been sitting and teaching in the Temple, and you have not arrested Me. ⁵⁶ However, all this has happened that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all His disciples deserted Him and ran away.

MARK 14:51 A certain young man was also following Him wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They tried to take hold of him, ⁵² but he left the linen cloth and ran away naked.

First Trial: Examination by Annas

Jerusalem, Annas’ House

JOHN 18:12 Then the troop of soldiers, the commander and the Jewish assistants arrested Jesus and tied Him up. ¹³ They took Him to Annas first. For he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year. ¹⁴ It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews, “It is better that one Man should die for the people.”

JOHN 18:19 Then the High Priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching.

²⁰ Jesus answered him, “I have been speaking openly to the world. I have always been teaching in the synagogue and in the Temple, where all the Jews come together, and have not been saying anything in secret. ²¹ Why do you question Me? Ask those who have heard what I have told them! Surely, they know what I have said.”

²² After He had said this, one of the assistants who was standing near Jesus slapped His face and asked, “Is that how You answer the High Priest?”

²³ Jesus answered him, “If I have said anything wrong, give evidence about what has been wrong! However, if I have said what is good, why do you hit Me?”

Second Trial: Home of Caiaphas, High Priest (and the Betrayal of Peter)

Jerusalem, House of Caiaphas

JOHN 18:24 Then Annas sent Him, still bound, to Caiaphas, the High Priest. MARK 14:53 The men led Jesus away to the Chief Priest and all the Chief Priests, the elders and the scribes assembled. ⁵⁴ Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the Chief Priest. He was sitting with the servants and warming himself at the fire. ⁵⁵ The Chief Priests and the whole Jewish council were trying to find some evidence against Jesus to put Him to death but could not find any. ⁵⁶ For many were testifying falsely against Him, but their statements in evidence did not agree. ⁵⁷ Then some men stood up and gave this false testimony against Him: ⁵⁸ “We heard Him saying, ‘I shall destroy this Temple, made with hands; and in three days I shall build another not made with hands.’” ⁵⁹ However, even on this point their evidence did not agree.

⁶⁰ Then the Chief Priest stood up in the middle and asked Jesus, “Are You not answering at all? What is it that these men are testifying against You?”

⁶¹ However, Jesus remained silent and did not answer at all.

LUKE 22:66 In the morning, the council of elders of the people, including the Chief Priests and the scribes, held a meeting. They brought Jesus before their council and asked, ⁶⁷ “Are You the Christ? Tell us!”

He replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe Me. ⁶⁸ If I ask you a question, you will not answer. ⁶⁹ However, from now on the Son of Man will be sitting at the right hand of the power of God.”

⁷⁰ All of them asked, “Are You, then, the Son of God?”

He answered them, “As you say: I am He.”

⁷¹ They asked, “Why do we need any more testimony? We ourselves have heard Him say it.”

MARK 14:64 You have heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?” They all condemned Him, saying that He deserved to die. ⁶⁵ Then some men began to spit at Him, cover His face, strike Him with their fists and say to Him, “Prophesy!” The attendants also gave Him blows.

⁶⁶ While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the Chief Priest came, ⁶⁷ and, when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You were also with the Man from Nazareth, this Jesus!”

⁶⁸ However, he denied it, saying: “I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” He went outside to the forecourt, and a rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ When the servant girl saw him, she again began to tell those who were standing around, “This is one of them!”

⁷⁰ However, he denied it again. After a little while, those who were standing near began to say to Peter again, “In fact you are one of them. For you are a Galilean.”

⁷¹ However, he began to curse and swear: “I do not know this Man, about whom you are talking.”

⁷² Immediately a rooster crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the Words that Jesus had told him: “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.”

Then he began to weep.

M: Here ends the reading.

SOON AND NEVER
Sermon for the 4th mid-week Lenten Service 2024

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.

The text for our sermon tonight is Psalm 41:5: “**My enemies are asking maliciously about me: “When will he die, and when will his name disappear?”**”

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

Dear friends in Christ,

King David *had plenty of enemies* - that was the reason why he wrote the words of our text.

After being anointed by Samuel, yet before he finally attained the throne, David spent a long time being hunted by King Saul, who had jealously made himself David’s enemy. After David reached the throne, he was obliged to continue the war against Israel’s generational enemy, the Philistines.¹ Then, there was David’s son Absalom, who had staged a coup to remove his father forever from the throne.² These are examples of the enemies who maliciously said of David, “**When will he die, and when will his name disappear?”**”

Given the opportunity, David could have provided good and faithful answers to both questions. When his enemies had asked, “**When will he die?**” he could have rightly answered, “*Whenever the Lord of hosts desires it. Maybe sooner, maybe later, but NOT a moment before I receive from the Lord every day written for me in His book.*” And when they asked, “**When will his name disappear?**” David could have said to that, “*NEVER. My name will NOT perish.*” The Lord of Hosts Himself had promised to preserve and protect David’s name and memory forever. He had chosen David according to His own good pleasure, saying to the prophet Samuel, “*You shall anoint for Me him whom I declare to you*” (1 Samuel 16:3). Later, the same God swore His eternal oath to David: “*I shall make a great name for you, like the names of the greatest men on the earth I shall raise up your Descendant after you, who will come from your body, and I shall establish His kingdom ... I shall make the throne of His kingdom stand for ever*” (2 Samuel 7:9, 12-13).

Jesus of Nazareth spoke through David in Psalm 41, saying, “**My enemies are asking maliciously about me: “When will he die, and when will his name disappear?”**” David’s words in the Psalms are actually the words of Jesus because all the Psalms were written about our Lord. They “*bear witness,*” said Jesus, “*about Me*” (John 5:39).

¹ 2 Samuel 21:15-22

² 2 Samuel 15

Like His father David, Jesus also had - and still has - plenty of enemies. Our Lord's most famous enemy is "*the ancient snake, who is called "the Devil" and "Satan," who deceives the whole world*" (Revelation 12:9). Death is also an enemy of our Lord; it will be destroyed on the Final Day, the Day of Judgment. Jesus further accumulated many enemies during the days of His humiliation - men who feared His incarnation and hated His preaching, as well as men who could not abide by His authority and conspired to see Him die.

Like His father David before Him, our Lord Jesus could likewise give good and faithful answers to the questions posed by His enemies. To their question, "**When will he die?**" Jesus could rightly answer His enemies, "I shall die at exactly the right time; NOT a moment before and NOT a moment after that time decreed from eternity by My Father in heaven! You may rest assured, My enemy, that I shall indeed die. The Son of Man must '*suffer greatly at the hands of the elders, Chief Priests and scribes, be killed and be raised on the third day*' (Matthew 16:21). But you, O enemy, you will NOT take My life from Me. I voluntarily lay it down and voluntarily take it up again! '*No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have authority to lay it down and have authority to take it back again. This command I have received from My Father,*' (John 10:18) and NOT from any enemy! '*You would not have any authority at all over Me if it had not been given to you from above*' (John 19:11). Nonetheless, I shall indeed soon die."

As to the question asked in malice concerning Jesus about "**when will his name disappear,**" our Lord's answer is the same as David's answer: **NEVER**. "*Father,*" prayed Jesus, "*'glorify Your name!'* Then a voice came from heaven: "*I both have glorified it and shall glorify it again.*"" (John 12:28). Jesus IS the name of God, and His name is glorious!

The heavenly Father glorified His own, eternal, imperishable name when He placed that name upon Jesus of Nazareth, the Child "*conceived by the Holy Spirit*" and "*born of the virgin Mary,*" of whom the angel said He "*will be called holy - the Son of God*" (Luke 1:35).

The heavenly Father again glorified His name when His Son was lifted up for the sins of the world, thus drawing all people to Himself.³

The eternal name of God was yet again glorified in the resurrection of our Lord, when God "*highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name*" (Philippians 2:9), "*far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named*" (Ephesians 1:21).

"My enemies (of Jesus) are asking maliciously about me: 'When will he die, and when will his name disappear?'" Soon and inevitably, says the Lord, and

³ John 12:32

NEVER: in the days of His humiliation, our Lord's answers to His enemies' questions were firm and unshakable, as David's answers were before Him, so confident was the Christ in His Father's love.

Like it or not, we too have plenty of enemies. The Small Catechism names them in the *Third Petition of the Lord's Prayer*: [1] the devil, [2] the world, and [3] our sinful nature, which does not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come. We may have accumulated other enemies for ourselves - enemies that we can name personally. Whomever these additional enemies may be, they all fit squarely into that group of three.

In the same way that Psalm 41 speaks of David and of our Christ, it likewise speaks of us. It speaks about us *because* it speaks about Jesus and because we have been eternally united to Him in Baptism. Because of our baptismal connection to Jesus and because of our participation in our father David's confident faith, we are able to give the same confident and even convincing answer to our enemies that both David and Jesus confidently gave before you: "*When will he or she die?*" You can answer your enemies by saying, "Soon enough - but NOT a moment too soon or a moment too late. My Lord's '*eyes saw my unformed substance; in [His] book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me*' (Psalm 139:16). Like the stars are in heaven, so are my days on earth: '*Not one is missing*'" (Isaiah 40:26). You, O enemy, can worry and fret about my death if you wish, but I shall not! My Lord Jesus has promised, "*Consider the ravens! They do not sow or reap. They have no storeroom or barn, and yet God feeds them. How much more valuable are you than the birds?*" ²⁵ *Which of you by worrying can add an hour to his length of life?* ²⁶ *Therefore, if you cannot do even the smallest thing, why do you worry about the rest?*" (Luke 12:24-26).

Your enemies say of you in malice, "**When will (your) name disappear?**" Your answer is "NEVER." "*Rejoice that your names are written in heaven,*" said the Lord (Luke 10:20). "*You will be delivered,*" said the Lord, "*along with everyone whose name was written before the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the Lamb who was slain*" (see Daniel 12:1; Revelation 13:8). You are already part of "*the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven*" (Hebrews 12:23). You will not be forgotten, and the memory of you will never cease. Through your Baptism into the Christ, the Lord of hosts has engraved you on the palms of His hands.⁴ Your life and your name will always be before Him, and your enemies will be the ones who come to nothing. Amen.

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

⁴ Isaiah 49:16