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Bulletin for the 6th Lenten Service

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PSALM: You have been treating Your servant well, O LORD, according to Your Word. Teach me good judgment and knowledge! For I trust in Your Commandments. Before I was afflicted, I used to sin thoughtlessly but now I have been keeping Your Word. You are good and do what is good. Teach me Your Prescriptions! Although arrogant people have smeared me with lies, I shall keep Your Directions with all my heart. Their hearts are as insensitive as fat, but I have taken delight in Your Instruction. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your Prescriptions. The Instruction from Your mouth is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Psalm 119:65-72

COLLECT: O LORD, spare us from the folly of wickedness and the pursuit of evil. Make us rejoice in Your saving acts that we who have been redeemed by Your Son may abound in works of faith, hope, and love: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

SERMON: Psalm 41:7-8 Vindication

All who hate me are whispering together about me. They are planning harm for me and saying, ⁸ *“A devilish disease is being poured out for him. He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down.”*

1st Reading: Job 1:6-22

There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD asked Satan, “From where do you come?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming around on the earth and from walking back and forth on it.”

⁸ The LORD asked Satan: “Have you considered My servant Job? Indeed, there is no one like him on the earth. He is a blameless and upright man, who fears God and keeps away from evil.”

⁹ Satan answered the LORD: “Does Job fear God without a reason? ¹⁰ Have You Yourself not protected him, his family and everything he has with a thorn hedge around him on every side? You have been blessing the work of his hands, so that his livestock have spread out over the land. ¹¹ However, I beg You, stretch out Your hand and strike everything that he has! Then he will certainly curse You to Your face.”

¹² The LORD told Satan: “Look! Everything he has is in your hands. Nevertheless, do not stretch out your hand against him!”

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job's loss of his possessions and his children

¹³ One day, Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's home. ¹⁴ A messenger came to Job and said: "The oxen were ploughing and the donkeys grazing near them, ¹⁵ and the Sabceans attacked, took them away and killed the servants with the edge of the sword. I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁶ While he was still speaking, another came and said: "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants. It consumed them, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁷ While he was still speaking, another came and said: "The Chaldeans formed three companies, made a raid on the camels and took them away. They also killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

¹⁸ While he was still speaking, another came and said: "Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at their eldest brother's home, ¹⁹ when suddenly a fierce wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people, and they are dead. I am the only one who has escaped to tell you."

²⁰ Job got up, tore his garment and shaved his head. Then he fell on the ground and worshipped. ²¹ He said: "I have come from my mother's womb naked and shall I return naked. The LORD has given and the LORD has taken away. May the name of the LORD be blessed!"

²² In all this, Job did not sin or ascribe anything improper to God.

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.

Pilate Delivers Jesus to Be Crucified

MATTHEW 27:²⁴When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was breaking out instead, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd. He said, "I am innocent of this Man's blood. You will see to it yourselves."

²⁵ All the people answered, "Let His blood be on us and on our children!"

The Way to Golgotha

From the Governor's Palace, through the city, outside the gate of Jerusalem, Golgatha

MARK 15:²⁰After they had mocked Him, they took off the purple robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him out to crucify Him.

²¹ A certain man, Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was going past as he was coming in from the country, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross.

LUKE 23:27 A large crowd of the people followed Him. The women in the crowd were mourning and weeping for Him. ²⁸ Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me! Rather, weep for yourselves and for your children! ²⁹ For indeed the days are coming when people will say, ‘Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that have not borne children and the breasts that have not suckled!’ ³⁰ Then people will begin to say to the mountains: ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills: ‘Cover us!’ ³¹ For, if they do these things to the green tree, what will be done to the dry one?”

The Crucifixion

Golgotha

MARK 15:22 They took Jesus to the place called “Golgotha,” which means “The Place of the Skull.” ²³ They tried to give Him wine mixed with myrrh, but He did not take it.

LUKE 23: ³² Two other men, who were criminals, were also led out to be executed with Him.

³³ When they came to the place that is called “The Skull,” they crucified Him there with the criminals, one at His right. and the other at His left. ³⁴ Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them! For they do not know what they are doing.” JOHN 19:17 Jesus went out, carrying His own cross, to the place that was called “the Place of the Skull,” which is called “Golgotha” in Aramaic. ¹⁸ There they crucified Him with two other men, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle.

¹⁹ Pilate also wrote a notice and put it on the cross. It read: “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”

²⁰ Therefore, many Jews read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. The notice had been written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek.

²¹ Therefore, the High Priests of the Jews told Pilate, “Do not write: ‘The King of the Jews,’ but: ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews!””

²² Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”

²³ When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His outer garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, and the undergarment. The undergarment was without a seam, woven from the top in one piece. ²⁴ Therefore, they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but let us throw dice for it, to decide who will get it!”

This happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled that says: “They divided My outer garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.”

So, that is what the soldiers did.

Jesus’ provision for the care of Mary

²⁵ Jesus’ mother, His mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were standing near the cross of Jesus.

²⁶ Therefore, when Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, there is your son.” ²⁷ Then He said to the

disciple, “There is your mother.”

From that time on, this disciple took her into his own home.

MATTHEW 27:38 At that time two robbers were crucified with Him, one at His right, and the other at His left. ³⁹ Those who were passing by kept ridiculing Him, shaking their heads, ⁴⁰ and saying, “You, who are going to tear down the Temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

⁴¹ The Chief Priests, together with the scribes and elders, also kept making fun of Him in a similar way, saying, ⁴² “He saved others: He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel. He should come down from the cross now, and we shall believe in Him.

⁴³ He trusts in God. Let God rescue Him now if He wants Him! For He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

LUKE 23:39 One of the criminals who hung there was blaspheming Him: “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!”

⁴⁰ However, the other criminal rebuked him. He said, “Do you not even fear God? For you are under the same condemnation. ⁴¹ We are also being punished justly. For we are getting what we deserve for what we have done. However, this Man has done nothing wrong.”

⁴² Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!”

⁴³ Jesus told him, “Truly, I tell you, today you will be with Me in paradise.”

MATTHEW 27:45 At noon darkness came over the whole land and lasted until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶ About three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “This man is calling Elijah.”

JOHN 19:28 After this, knowing that everything had now been finished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.”

²⁹ A jar full of sour wine had been placed there. So, they put a sponge full of the sour wine on hyssop and lifted it to His mouth. MATTHEW 27:49 The others said, “Let Him alone! Let us see if Elijah is coming to save Him!” JOHN 19:30 When Jesus had taken the sour wine, He said, “It is finished.”

LUKE 23:46 Jesus cried out aloud, “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”

After He had said this, He breathed His last. JOHN 19:30B Then He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

MATTHEW 27:51 Just then the curtain in the Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs, after Jesus had risen, went into the Holy City and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the captain and those who were watching Jesus with him saw the earthquake

and the other things that happened, they were terrified. They said, “Truly, this Man was the Son of God!” ^{LUKE 23:47B}“Certainly this Man was righteous.”

When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what had happened, they beat their breasts and went away.

⁴⁹ However, all those who knew Him, including the women who had followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

^{MARK 15:40} There were also some women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James the Younger and of Joses and Salome.

⁴¹ While Jesus was in Galilee, they had been following Him and supporting Him. There were also many other women who had come up to Jerusalem with Him.

Jesus' Side Pierced

^{JOHN 19:31} Since it was the Day of Preparation, to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the Sabbath, and because that Sabbath day was an important one, the Jews asked Pilate that the men's legs should be broken, and the bodies taken away.

³² The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and those of the other man who had been crucified with Jesus.

³³ However, when they came to Jesus and saw that He was dead already, they did not break His legs; ³⁴ but one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. ³⁵ He who has seen it has been testifying about it. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

³⁶ For these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled: “None of His bones shall be broken!” ³⁷ Again another Scripture-passage says: “They will look at the One whom they have pierced.”

Burial of Jesus

The Tomb in the Garden, close to Golgotha

^{MARK 15:42} When evening had already come, since it was the Day of Preparation, which is the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph from Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who himself also was waiting for the kingdom of God, dared to go in to Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴ Pilate wondered whether Jesus had already died. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus was already dead. ⁴⁵ When he had found from the centurion that this was so, Pilate granted the body to Joseph. ⁴⁶ Joseph bought linen, took Him down and wrapped Him in the linen. ^{JOHN 19:39} Nicodemus also came, the man who had come to Jesus by night at the beginning. He brought a mixture of about thirty kilograms of myrrh and aloes.

⁴⁰ Therefore, they took Jesus' body and wrapped it in strips of linen with the spices according to the Jewish burial-custom.

⁴¹ There was a garden at the place where Jesus was crucified, and, in the garden, there was a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. ⁴² They laid Jesus there, because

it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and because the tomb was nearby. ^{MARK 15:46B} He laid Him in a tomb that had been cut out of rock and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. ⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, were watching where He was laid. ^{LUKE 23:55} The women who had come with Him from Galilee followed closely behind. They observed the tomb and how His body was laid. ⁵⁶ When they went back, they prepared spices and perfumes. Then they rested on the Sabbath according to the Commandment.

^{MATTHEW 27:62} The next day, the one after the Day of Preparation, the Chief Priests and Pharisees met with Pilate. ⁶³ They said, “Sir, we remember how that deceiver said while He was still alive, ‘After three days I shall rise.’ ⁶⁴ Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, to keep His disciples from coming and stealing Him and telling the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead!’ Then the latter deception will be worse than the former.”

⁶⁵ Pilate told them, “You have a guard. Go and make it as secure as you know how!”

⁶⁶ They went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

P: Here ends the reading.

The congregation stands.

VINDICATION

Sermon for the 6th mid-week Lenten Sermon 2024

Psalm 41:7-8

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

The text for our sermon tonight is Psalm 41:7-8: **All who hate me are whispering together about me. They are planning harm for me and saying,** ⁸ **“A devilish disease is being poured out for him. He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down.”**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

In our everyday speech, the word *enemy* may seem to overstate our situation. To be sure, “*the devil, the world, and our sinful nature*” (Small Catechism, Third Petition) are certainly mortal enemies who oppose us with deadly intent. But those are *spiritual enemies*, not physical, human enemies who look us in the eye. Not many of us have those sorts of enemies these days, but King David and our Lord Jesus did. Even if there may be loveless people in your life who drum their fingers, waiting for you to die so that they can have your money, those people will hopefully not scheme to commit your murder. Treacherous, murderous men schemed against David, which forced him to write, “**They are planning harm for me and saying,** ⁸ **“A devilish disease is being poured out for him.”** Christ Jesus, our Lord, likewise endured the deadly designs of murderers. Matthew writes how “*the Chief Priests and the elders of the people assembled... They plotted to arrest Jesus in an underhanded way and kill Him*” (Matthew 26:3-4).

Your and my situations are measurably different. We do not (yet) have people who directly seek our deaths. Most of our enemies are likely less violent: people who are just plain

mean; people who speak evil about us; people who seem oddly gratified by our pain; people who selfishly take but refuse to give; people who willingly commit injustice and leave us feeling miserable; people who sometimes make us wish we actually were *dead*. Perhaps the worst thing about such people is that they seem to get away with it. Rest assured: those who treat you badly will not get away with it.

David's enemies thought that they would get away with their injustices against him. They had poured out a deadly thing for him, then foolishly said concerning him, "**He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down.**" They were wrong. No one who dies ever stays dead. All people will rise, "*some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*" (Daniel 12:2). Jesus spoke the truth that gives shape to all eternity when He declared, "*Truly, truly, I tell you that the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live... Do not be astonished at this, because an hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice ²⁹ and will come out. Those who have done good will come out to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil will come out to the resurrection of condemnation*" (John 5:25, 28-29).

Those words speak of the certainty of the resurrection. David lived in that certainty. Jesus of Nazareth embodies that certainty. You have been baptised into that same certainty. St. Paul writes, "*Do you not know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? ... If we have been planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, then we shall be planted together with Him also in the likeness of His resurrection*" (Romans 6:3, 5).

The certainty of the resurrection allowed David to live in confidence and hope, even while his enemies had said, "**He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down.**" David knew very well that he would indeed rise and that knowledge gave David comfort and power.

David's faith in the resurrection indicated that, whatever he might have been required to suffer, his suffering would not last forever. David's psalms are full of the hope of the resurrection, even while he teetered on the brink of death. The resurrection is why David could confidently pray - and why you also can pray with equal confidence, "*I shall not be afraid of the tens of thousands of people who have taken positions against me on all sides*" (Psalm 3:6), and "*Let Me declare Your name to My brothers! I shall praise You amid the assembly*" (Psalm 22:22), and yet again "*Surely, I am convinced that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living*" (Psalm 27:13).

Yet relief from suffering is only *the first comfort of the resurrection.* The second comfort is vindication. Vindication is when all wrongs get made right. Vindication happens when those who suffer losses get their losses returned to them. Have any of you suffered unanswered injustice so that you long for and await vindication? You are not alone. The souls of countless Christian martyrs wait with you. They loudly cry out from the pages of the Word,

“How long, holy and true Master, until You judge the inhabitants of the earth and take revenge on them for our blood?” (Revelation 6:10).

“All who hate me are whispering together about me.” David knew that although his enemies might win a battle here or there, they could not win the war. David knew he would be vindicated; you will be too. That is why David could also pray - and why you also can pray with him: *“All my enemies will be ashamed and extremely terrified. They will turn back. They will suddenly be put to shame”* (Psalm 6:10); and *“His violence comes down on his own skull”* (Psalm 7:16); and again, in Psalm 41, *“In this way I know that You take pleasure in me, that my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.”*¹² *However, as for me, You have firmly grasped me in my integrity and You will set me in Your presence for ever”* (vv. 11-12).

How do we know that David’s enemies did not finally get away with it? More to the point, how do we know that your enemies will not get away with what they have done to you? We know these things because the enemies of Jesus could not and did not get away with their plans against Him.

Psalm 41 speaks in the voice of Christ, as surely as it speaks in the voice of King David: **“All who hate me are whispering together about me. They are planning harm for me and saying,”**⁸ **“A devilish disease is being poured out for him. He will never get up again from the place where he has lain down.”** The enemies of Jesus were so desperate that He not **“get up again from the place where he has lain down”** that they posted a guard and imposed a seal upon the tomb.

The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, *“Sir, we remember how that deceiver said while He was still alive, ‘After three days I shall rise.’”*⁶⁴ *Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, to keep His disciples from coming and stealing Him and telling the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead’! Then the latter deception will be worse than the former.”*⁶⁵ *Pilate told them, “You have a guard. Go and make it as secure as you know how!”*⁶⁶ *They went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard”* (Matthew 27:63-66).

The plan did not work. Jesus rose from the dead. God the Father *“crowned Him with glory and honour”* (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7). Jesus was vindicated in His resurrection, and you will be too. Those who have committed injustices against you will not remain unanswered forever. Those who have harmed you have truly only harmed themselves. You will gain back all that has been taken away from you by selfish hands. You will rise again from where you are finally lain down, and King David will rise with you, in the power of the Christ who rose before both of you.¹ And you will say on that great day, with David and with Jesus, *“However, as for me, You have firmly grasped me in my integrity and You will set me in Your presence for ever.”*¹³ *Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen”* (Psalm 41:12-13). Amen.

¹ Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5