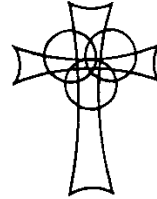


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The Sacred Season of Lent 2020
“Eyes on Jesus”

Midweek Lenten Devotions and Bible Study
The Sixth Wednesday of Lent
April 1, 2020

Service of the Word in Passiontide

✠ *Jesus, Mercy!* ✠

The Opening Versicles:

Psalms 70:1 and 31:14

- P** O God, make speed to save us.
C O Lord, make haste to help us.
- P** My trust is in You, O Lord.
C I have said, “You are my God.”

- P** ¹Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
- C** ²**The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers take counsel together,
against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,**
- P** ³“Let us burst their bonds apart
and cast away their cords from us.”
- C** ⁴**He who sits in the heavens laughs;
the Lord holds them in derision.**
- P** ⁵Then he will speak to them in his wrath,
and terrify them in his fury, saying,
- C** ⁶**“As for me, I have set my King
on Zion, my holy hill.”**
- P** ⁷I will tell of the decree:
The LORD said to me, “You are my Son;
today I have begotten you.
- C** ⁸**Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,
and the ends of the earth your possession.**
- P** ⁹You shall break them with a rod of iron
and dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”
- C** ¹⁰**Now therefore, O kings, be wise;
be warned, O rulers of the earth.**
- P** ¹¹Serve the LORD with fear,
and rejoice with trembling.
- C** ¹²**Kiss the Son,
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,
for his wrath is quickly kindled.**
- P** Blessed are all who take refuge in him.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

- L** A reading from the Passion according to Saint Mark.

¹And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole Council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. ²And Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

And he answered him, “You have said so.”³ And the chief priests accused him of many things.⁴ And Pilate again asked him, “Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you.”⁵ But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

⁶Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked.⁷ And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas.⁸ And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.⁹ And he answered them, saying, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”¹⁰ For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up.¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.¹² And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”¹³ And they cried out again, “Crucify him.”¹⁴ And Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him.”¹⁵ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

¹⁶And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion.¹⁷ And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him.¹⁸ And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!”¹⁹ And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him.²⁰ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

The Scripture Study for the Day

“Worldly Eyes”

Introduction:

Last week, we saw how Caiaphas and the Jewish leaders coldly set aside the Law of God to make way for the worldly goal of preserving their political power by bringing false charges against Jesus. In this lesson, Pilate likewise views matters in a worldly, pragmatic way, wishing to placate the Jewish leaders and crowd, so he consents to handing Jesus over for crucifixion. The soldiers see the opposite of a worldly king, but their ironic hailing of Him as “King of the Jews” (Mark 15:18) proclaims who He really is. The world looks for power and glory; God’s way is suffering and the cross.

Questions:

1. Read John 18:33–38. What does Jesus reveal about the nature of His kingdom? How does Pilate’s postmodern query “What is truth?” reveal what really matters to worldly minded rulers?

John 18:33-38

³³ So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” ³⁴ Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?” ³⁵ Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?” ³⁶ Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷ Then Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.” ³⁸ Pilate said to him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in him.

2. What does the participation of the crowd reveal about the nature of worldly government? What is the best form of government? See Mark 10:42–45.

Mark 10:42-45

⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

3. What is particularly pernicious about the chief priests urging the crowds on? See Proverbs 29:22. How does the faithlessness of the chief priests highlight Jesus’ role as He is depicted in Hebrews 7:26–27?

Proverbs 29:22

²² A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.

Hebrews 7:26-27

²⁶ For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷ He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

4. How did the release of the murderer Barabbas underscore what was happening in Jesus' Passion? See 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 1:4; 3:13.

2 Corinthians 5:21

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Galatians 1:4

⁴ who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,

Galatians 3:13

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

5. While the world considers the idea of the crucifixion of God Incarnate “folly” (1 Corinthians 1:23), the cross became the defining symbol of Christianity. How does Paul focus our eyes on the cross in 1 Corinthians 2:2 and Galatians 2:20; 6:14?

1 Corinthians 1:23

²³ but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

1 Corinthians 2:2

² For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Galatians 2:20

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 6:14

¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which^[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

6. What does the soldiers' treatment of Jesus reveal about the human heart? See Mark 7:21–23. What does their robing, crowning, and kneeling before Jesus reveal about the world's idea of what kings should be like? Compare Esther 1:1–9.

Mark 7:21-23

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Esther 1:1-9

^{1:1} Now in the days of Ahasuerus, the Ahasuerus who reigned from India to Ethiopia over 127 provinces, ² in those days when King Ahasuerus sat on his royal throne in Susa, the citadel, ³ in the third year of his reign he gave a feast for all his officials and servants. The army of Persia and Media and the nobles and governors of the provinces were before him, ⁴ while he showed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor and pomp of his greatness for many days, 180 days. ⁵ And when these days were completed, the king gave for all the people present in Susa the citadel, both great and small, a feast lasting for seven days in the court of the garden of the king's palace. ⁶ There were white cotton curtains and violet hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rods and marble pillars, and also couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and precious stones. ⁷ Drinks were served in golden vessels, vessels of different kinds, and the royal wine was lavished according to the bounty of the king. ⁸ And drinking was according to this edict: “There is no compulsion.” For the king had given orders to all the staff of his palace to do as each man desired. ⁹ Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women in the palace that belonged to King Ahasuerus.

7. Christians are called to love the Lord with all their heart and have Jesus as their dearest friend. How do James 4:4 and 1 John 2:15–17 describe friendship with and love of this sinful world?

James 4:4

⁴ You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

1 John 2:15-17

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Conclusion:

Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world, and He prayed to His Father for you: “[Father,] I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one” (John 17:14–15). By His righteousness, we stand justified before God. By His intercession, we are kept safe from Satan. By keeping our eyes fixed on Him, we are kept from falling back into the snares of this dying world. St. Paul writes to those baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection: “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:1–4).

The Prayers:

- P** With faith and love and in union with Christ, let us offer our prayers before the throne of grace.

Have mercy on Your people, for whom Your Son laid down His life:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- P** Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations, and have pity on those torn apart by division:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- P** Strengthen all who are persecuted for Your Name’s sake, and deliver them from evil:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- P** Look in mercy upon all who suffer, and hear those who cry out in pain and desolation:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- P** Bring comfort to the dying, and gladden their hearts with the vision of Your glory:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- P** Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, may we too come with them to glory everlasting:

C **Hear us, O Lord, for Your mercy is great.**
- L** Let us commend the world, for which Christ suffered, to the mercy and protection of God.

Open prayer may be offered and silence is kept.

The Lord's Prayer:

P Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven,**
 hallowed be Thy name,
 Thy kingdom come,
 Thy will be done on earth
 as it is in heaven;
 give us this day our daily bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us;
 and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
 and the power and the glory
 forever and ever. Amen.

The Collect of the Week:

P Let us pray.
Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

The Collect for the Lenten Season:

P 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, our Lord.

C **Amen.**



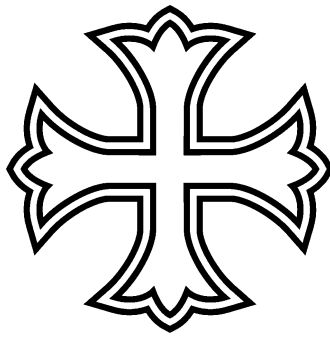
The Closing Prayer:

Anima Christi (14th Century)

P We pray:
C **Soul of Christ, sanctify me,
Body of Christ, save me,
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O good Jesus, hear me:
hide me within Your wounds
and never let me be separated from you.
From the wicked enemy defend me,
in the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to You,
so that with Your saints I may praise You
forever and ever. Amen.**

The Benediction:

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
C **Amen.**



Acknowledgments

Brief Service of the Word from Lutheran Service Book Agenda and from Common Worship: Daily Prayer.

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