

While he was sitting on the judgment seat, Pilate's wife sent him a message. She said, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, since I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus put to death. The governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They all shouted together with one voice: "Take him away! Release Barabbas to us!" Pilate said to them, "Then what do you want me to do with the Man you call the King of the Jews? What should I do with Jesus, Who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Crucify Him!" But the governor said, "Why? What has He done wrong?" But they kept shouting even louder: "Crucify Him!" Pilate addressed them again, because he wanted to release Jesus, but they kept shouting, "Crucify! Crucify Him!" He said to them the third time, "Why? What evil has He done? I have found no grounds for sentencing Him to death. So I will whip Him and release Him." But they kept pressuring him with loud shouts, demanding that He be crucified. And their voices were overwhelming. When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, and that instead it was turning into a riot, he decided that what they demanded would be done. He took water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, "I am innocent of this righteous Man's Blood. It is your responsibility."

And all the people answered, "His Blood will be on us and on our children!" Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. Then Pilate took Jesus and had Him flogged. The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole cohort of soldiers around Him. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. They twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They put a staff in His right hand, knelt in front of Him, and mocked Him by saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spit on Him, took the staff, and hit Him repeatedly on His head. They kept hitting Him in the face. Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing Him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against Him." Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!" When the chief priests and temple police saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" Pilate told them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no basis for a charge against Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law He must die, because He claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He went back inside the palace again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate asked Him, "Are you not talking to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to release You or to crucify You?" Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me at all, if it had not been given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed Me over to you has the greater sin." From then on Pilate tried to release Jesus. But the Jews shouted, "If you let this Man go, you are no friend of Caesar! Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar!" When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's seat at a place called the Stone Pavement, or Gabbatha in Aramaic. It was about the sixth hour on the day of preparation for the Passover. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" They shouted, "Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your king?" "*We have no king but Caesar!*" the chief priests answered. So then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

After they had mocked Him, the soldiers took off the robe and put His own clothes on Him. Then they led Him away to crucify Him with Jesus carrying His own Cross. As they were going out of the city, a certain man, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), was passing by on his way in from the country. They placed the cross on Him and made Him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd of the people was following Him, including women who were mourning and wailing for Him. But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Yes, be sure of this: the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry?" (*Here ends 5th Reading*)

○ † I. The Service of Vespers ELH p.120 † ○

WELCOME: 03/09/16 4:30pm LENT 4-MIDWEEK INVOCATION Please *rise*.

P: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS *P: Dearly beloved! We have come together in the presence of God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at His hand, to set forth His most worthy praise, to hear His holy Word, and to ask for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and salvation. O come, let us worship Him! Let us kneel and bow down before Him. Let us confess our sins with penitent hearts, and obtain forgiveness by His infinite grace and mercy.*

C: Almighty and most merciful Father, we have strayed from Your ways like lost sheep. We have followed the devices and desires of our hearts. We have offended against Your holy Law. We have done those things which we should not have done, and we have not done those things which we should have done. Have mercy on us, O Lord! Spare us and restore us, according to the promises You have declared to us in Jesus Christ, our Lord. For His sake grant that we may live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of Your holy Name.

THE ABSOLUTION

P: The almighty and merciful Lord has granted us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins, grace for true repentance and amendment of life, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING HYMN "Christ, the Life of All the Living" ELH #333 7v, Sing Odd

- 1. Christ, the Life of all the living, - Christ, the Death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving - To the darkest depths of woe,--
Through thy sufferings, death, and merit - I eternal life inherit:
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, - Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**
- 3. Thou hast borne the smiting only - That my wounds might all be whole;
Thou hast suffered, sad and lonely, - Rest to give my weary soul;
Yea, the curse of God enduring, - Blessing unto me securing.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, - Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**
- 5. Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee - That from pain I might be free;
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee,-- Thence I gain security;
Comfortless Thy soul did languish - Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, - Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**
- 7. Then, for all that wrought my pardon, - For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden, - I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing, For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
FOR THAT LAST TRIUMPHANT CRY, - AND SHALL PRAISE THEE, LORD, ON HIGH.**

The VERSICLES ELH, p.120

P: ♪ O Lord, open my lips. C: ♪ And my mouth will show forth Your praise.

P: ♪ Make haste, O God, to deliver me. C: ♪ Make haste to help me, O Lord.

GLORIA PATRI C: ♪ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning; is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

📖 Here are the words to **Psalm 32** - Please READ along! 📖

P: Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

C: Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.

³ *When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.*

⁴ **For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.**

⁵ *I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.*

⁶ **For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him.**

⁷ *You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance.*

⁸ **I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.**

⁹ *Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you.*

¹⁰ **Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.**

¹¹ *Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*

(All) **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, one True God, now and forever. Amen**

PASSION HISTORY: 5TH READING ✕ *Trial (Pontius Pilate), "Crucify Him!"*

RESPONSORY *P: O Lord, have mercy upon us. C: ♪ Thanks be to You, O Lord!*

SERMON HYMN "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" ELH #308 4 verses

1. When I survey the wondrous Cross - On which the Prince of glory died, My richest gain I count but loss - And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast - Save in the death of Christ, my God; All the vain things that harm me most, - I sacrifice them to His Blood.
3. See, from His head, His hands, His feet, Sorrow and love flow mingled down. Did e'er such love and sorrow meet - Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine - That were a tribute far too small; **LOVE SO AMAZING, SO DIVINE, - DEMANDS MY SOUL, MY LIFE, MY ALL.**

IRONIES OF THE PASSION TODAY John 19:12-16 "**WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR**"

The OFFERING

The VERSICLE *P: ♪ Let my prayers rise before You as incense:*

C: ♪ And the lifting up of my hands-- As the ev'ning sacrifice.

In Place of **NUNC DIMITTIS "Peace to Soothe Our Bitter Woes"** ELH #595

(words to 2 verses of ELH #595 on top of next page ↗)

1. Peace to soothe our bitter woes, God in Christ- on us bestows;
Je-sus bought our peace- with God With- His holy, pre-cious Blood;
Peace in Him for sinners found, Is- the Gos-pel's joyful sound.

2. Peace to us the Church doth tell, 'Tis her wel-come and farewell;
Peace- was our Baptis-mal dow'r, Peace- shall bless our dy-ing hour;
PEACE BE WITH YOU, FULL AND FREE, NOW- AND THROUGH- ETERNITY.

KYRIE ELEISON (*Lord Have Mercy*) **C: ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. - Lord, have mercy upon us.**

The LORD'S PRAYER

**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 & ever, ♪A- -men.**

The (Evening) COLLECT (*Pastor prays, Congregation Amen*) **C: ♪ A- - -men.**

The BENEDICAMUS *P: ♪ Let us bless the Lord. C: ♪ Thanks be to God.*

The BENEDICTION *P: ♪ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God, And the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. C: ♪ A- - -men.*

CLOSING HYMN All Praise to Thee, My God ELH #565 3v *EVENING HYMN*

1. All praise to Thee, my God, this night - For all the blessings of the light.
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings, - Beneath Thine own almighty wings.
Forgive me, Lord, for Thy- dear- Son, - The ill that I this day- have- done
That with the world, myself and Thee, - I, ere- I- sleep, at peace may be.
2. Teach me to live that I may dread - The grave as little as my bed.
Teach me to die that so I may - Rise glorious at the awe-full Day.

Oh, may my soul on Thee repose, And may sweet sleep mine eyelids close,
Sleep that shall me more vigorous make - To serve my God when I awake.

3. When in the night I sleepless lie, - My soul with heav'nly thoughts supply;
Let no ill dreams disturb my rest, - No powers of darkness me molest.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host: - PRAISE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST.

Silent Prayer (Candles out.) **You may be seated.** ✕ **FELLOWSHIP**

FIFTH PASSION READING ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ **Jesus' Sentencing and Way to the Cross**

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, and said to them, "You brought this Man to me as One Who is misleading the people. Look, I have examined Him before you. I have found no basis for a charge against this Man regarding the things of which you accuse him. Herod did not either, because he sent him back to us. See, he has done nothing worthy of death. 16So I will punish him and then release him." At the time of the feast the governor had a custom: to release one prisoner to the crowd, whomever they wanted. At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas, who had been thrown in prison for a rebellion in the city and for murder. The crowd came up and began to ask him to do what he usually did for them. So when they were assembled, Pilate said to them, "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you? Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas - or Jesus, who is called Christ?" Pilate in fact knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because of envy. (*continues ↗*)

(LENT.4W) WED. John 19:12-16a **"WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR"** 03.02.16

INTRODUCTION **"I can't believe you're saying that!"** Have you ever said that? Maybe your teenage daughter, who's told you a thousand times she hates wearing dresses, suddenly tells you that she doesn't have a nice dress for church. Or parents, who have always been very frugal, suddenly splurge on a trip to Europe. Those kinds of unexpected reverses can throw us for a loop. However, they're nothing compared to someone who contradicts everything he or she has ever stood for just because it's advantageous to do so. A politician, who has opposed raising taxes for decades, suddenly comes out with a plan to raise taxes because that's the way the political wind is blowing. You can't believe your ears, because this guy has made his reputation as a tax cutter. But now he figures the only way to win an election is to argue for the things he's always been against. Of course, his opponent won't be shy to point out the irony of his flip-flop. Tonight, we have before us that kind of flip-flop. If Pontius Pilate had said, "I can't believe my ears!" it would've been totally fitting, because once again, the Jewish leadership was the source of tonight's irony of Jesus' Passion: **WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR.**

I. These words were the final argument in a dispute between Pilate and the Jewish chief priests. With these words, the priests won, or so they thought. **We have no king but Caesar. These words ended Pilate's hope of setting Jesus free.**

This argument began early that morning when the Jewish leadership **showed up at Pilate's palace to persuade him to carry out the death sentence** they had passed on Jesus only a few hours before. But Pilate wasn't going to let them dictate whom he executed in the name of the Roman Empire. So he questioned Jesus personally. It didn't take him very long to figure out that Jesus was guilty of nothing except making these guys jealous. Pilate held the real power in Jerusalem. He was supported by Roman troops and Roman law. The Jewish leaders had to argue with and manipulate Pilate because they did not have the legal authority to execute Jesus.

So these two forces squared off, almost as if Christ had no say in the matter. **Pontius Pilate was a Roman, a Gentile.** At best, he had only a surface knowledge of Jewish religion, and he probably didn't care to know any more than that. Pilate was loyal to Rome. And at heart, Pilate was a cynic. He didn't believe in truth. The chief priests were different in almost every way. They hated the Romans. They considered all Gentiles to be unclean and almost subhuman. They couldn't have cared less about the survival of the Roman Empire. However, they were all convinced that the God of Israel was the one true God.

Jesus, of course, was a Jew, but the Jewish religious leaders wanted him dead. They didn't care whether he was guilty or not. They were even willing to invent charges just to get rid of him. But the gentile governor - the representative of the occupying army, the man who said, **"What is truth?"** - that was the man who wanted justice for Jesus. So, again and again, **Pilate did try to find a way to set Him free.** He remembered the custom of releasing a prisoner for the Passover and offered Jesus to the crowd. He even

had him flogged and then brought back out in hopes that the crowd would feel sorry for Him. He sent Him to Herod to pass the buck. He argued with the priests and the Jewish mob in front of the palace. But in the end, **he could not escape from the logic of their argument: Jesus claimed to be a king. That meant He was in rebellion against Caesar.** If Pilate freed him, Pilate would be taking the enemy's side. Jesus had to be crucified. It was the Roman way. That forced Pilate to put him on trial publicly. When Pilate asked, **"Shall I crucify your king?"** the chief priests answered, **"We have no king but Caesar."** With that stunning answer, Pilate sent Jesus to die.

The only way Pilate could've resisted this drive to murder Jesus would've been **if he himself was willing to risk everything for Christ.** His career, indeed his very life, was on the line once the chief priests invoked Caesar. In the end, Pilate would not risk anything to save an innocent man. **Isn't that human nature? We take care of ourselves first.** That's, in fact, the real difference between **Jesus and everyone else in this story.** Jesus alone was willing to lay down His life for the good of others.

Are we any different from Pilate? If we imagine ourselves in his place, we almost can't help but daydream that we would have stood up to the Jewish leaders, even if it meant they would have run all the way to Rome to tattle on us. But would we? The truth is, most of us probably won't ever find ourselves in a situation quite this dramatic. Rather, **every day we have the opportunity to sacrifice our lives for God in the love we show to one another.** When you look at our real lives, are we any more willing to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others than Pilate was? Sacrificing ourselves for others is the core of real Christian love. **Are we willing to sacrifice everything for God? For the truth?** For the good of people who don't deserve it and who would never make such a sacrifice for us? To be faithful to God we have to accept the smirks and the dislike of people who don't want to be too fanatical about their faith. We have to stand on God's principles, instead of standing on convenience. Do we do that? - Or, don't we usually save our own skins, just as Pilate did? We wait for the right moment to talk about Jesus, and, strangely, the right moment never seems to come. We act friendly, but we don't really put ourselves out there for our neighbor and we never really risk anything for the cause of Christ.

(GOSPEL) All those sins and failures, all that lack of love deserves God's punishment in hell. **What an irony that Jesus endured this endless debate for people like us. In love, Jesus did endure it.** For Him, this was one more step to the Cross, one more step to dying and rising and setting us free. He could've put a stop to it at any moment. But He didn't. He played along while these little men argued and debated, knowing how it was going to end. Then He submitted when Pilate caved, **and He died.** The miracle in all this is that **God counts that perfect, self-sacrificing love of Christ as ours.** He looks at Jesus and **declares us NOT guilty** because of what Jesus did. And just as miraculous, **God counts that death as our payment for sin.** When Jesus died on that Cross, His Blood washed away all our selfishness, all our lies, all our guilt. God has forgiven those sins. Through faith in Jesus, we are now free.

II. Adding to tonight's Irony of the Passion, saying "**We have no king but Caesar.**" -- **These words are a sad comment on life without faith.** The chief priests hated Caesar. Jerusalem had a reputation for being one of the hardest places in the Roman Empire to rule, because the Jews were convinced that they were the people of God and that God would help them if they revolted - and they tried over and over again. "**We have no king but Caesar**" was a lie they never thought would pass their lips.

However, **there was a deeper meaning (and deeper Irony) to it.** Jesus **was** the true King of Israel. God had been promising for a thousand years to send a Son of King David to rule His people. Jesus was that Son of David, that Messiah. All Jewish hopes focused on Him. Abraham had looked forward in faith to the day of Christ, and **every true son of Abraham trusted in Him** even in the Old Testament. When these men rejected Jesus and said they had no king but Caesar, they **denied the faith of their fathers and removed themselves from the people of God.**

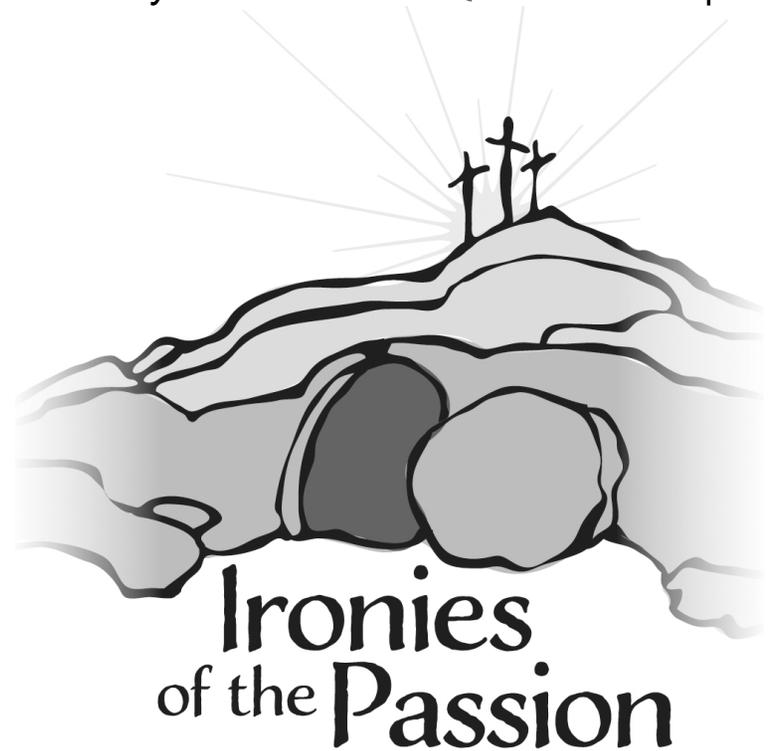
(LAW) In every person's heart there is a king. There is a **(Little) Caesar that rules our hopes and our dreams.** There is something that we steer by and work for. That king is supposed to be Jesus. His Word and his love are supposed to be the end all and be all of our existence. But for most people, the king is something else. Even for us Christians, when we were born, the king was something else. It was us and our pleasure and convenience. And even to this day, the old king of our hearts still wants his job back.

It would take surprisingly little for you and me to join these men in denying all that we have confessed and in claiming a false god as our king. **No sinner has the strength to remain faithful to Christ on his or her own.** The devil is constantly probing, constantly looking for that moment of weakness when he can pull us away from Christ and back into his kingdom. If you don't believe how easy it can be, **find a member of this church who you know used to come faithfully but has now drifted away.** Ask how "hard" it was to get out of the habit of coming to church. You'll be amazed **how easy it was.**

(GOSPEL) But, have no fear. The same Jesus who could've stopped this farce at any time **is in control of our lives too. He has given us faith,** and He promises He will keep that faith alive. **Trust in Him.** And, when you fear for your faith, that's when Jesus says, "*I am here. I love you. I have **forgiven** you. I have given you My **Word** to strengthen you. I **Baptized** you and have given you My **Supper** to keep your faith alive. I have given you pastors and teachers and fellow members to encourage you. I will **never leave you or forsake you.** My **Blood** washed all your sin away. I live in you, and I will **bring you home.**"*

(CONCLUSION) In every person's life, **there is a king.** The king in the heart of unbelievers leads them to hell. Whether they feel good and lucky about the lives they've led, or if they are sad and bitter about how hard it's been, either way their "king" leads them to the same place. But God has given us the one thing Pilate and the chief priests lacked - **faith in Christ.** So he has put a new King in our hearts. Yes, Jesus is that King. Trust in him and have no other king in your life. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL  ELS
Lent-Midweeks 2016  *Ironies of the Passion*
February 10th – March 16th  2016  4:30 pm



Services

Ash Wednesday/Midweek 1	.....This Man Went Home Justified	.....Luke 18:9-14
Midweek 2	.....It Is Better That One Man Die for the People!	.....John 11:45-53
Midweek 3	.....Not During the Feast	.....Matthew 26:1-5
Midweek 4	.....He Had Been Wanting to See Jesus	.....Luke 23:6-12
Midweek 5	.....We Have No King but Caesar!	.....John 19:12-16a
Midweek 6	.....Don't You Fear God?	.....Luke 23:39-43
Palm Sunday	.....Do You Hear What These Children Are Saying?	.....Matthew 21:12-17
Maundy Thursday	.....Do This in Remembrance of Me	.....1 Corinthians 11:23-29
Good Friday	.....He Said, "I Will Rise Again"	.....Matthew 27:62-66
Easter Sunday	.....Why Do You Look for the Living Among the Dead?	.....Luke 24:4-8