

(continued...) Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took His clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took His tunic which was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it. Instead, let's cast lots to see who gets it." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." So this is what the soldiers did. Then they sat down and were keeping watch over Him there. The people stood watching. And even the rulers were ridiculing Him, saying, "He saved others. Let Him save Himself, if this is the Christ of God, the chosen One!" People who passed by kept insulting Him, shaking their heads and saying, "You Who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" In the same way the chief priests, experts in the law and elders kept mocking Him. They said, "He saved others, but He cannot save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the Cross and we will believe in Him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue Him now, if He wants Him, because He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with Him kept insulting Him. One of the criminals hanging there was blaspheming Him, saying, "Aren't You the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? We are punished justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this Man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Amen I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Standing near the Cross of Jesus were His mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, he said to His mother, "Woman, here is your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Here is your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The sun was darkened. At the ninth hour Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "Listen, He is calling Elijah!" After this, knowing that everything had now been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." A jar full of wine vinegar was sitting there. Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, and soaked it with vinegar. Then he put it on a stick and gave him a drink. When Jesus had taken the wine vinegar, He said, "It is finished." Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into Your Hands I commit My spirit!" When He had said this, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Suddenly, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and rocks were split. Tombs were opened and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' Resurrection, went into the holy city, and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those who were guarding Jesus with him saw the earthquake and how He cried out and breathed His last, they were terrified and began to glorify God, saying, "This Man really was Righteous. Truly this was the Son of God!" All the crowds gathered to see this spectacle. When they saw what had happened, they returned home beating their chests. All those who knew Him, and many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had served Him were there watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Since it was Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses over the Sabbath. Because that Sabbath was special, they asked Pilate to have their legs broken and the bodies taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear. Immediately blood and water came out. The man who saw it has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. Indeed, these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones will be broken." Again another Scripture says, "They will look at the One they pierced."

(Here ends the 6th Passion History Reading)



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



WELCOME: 03/16/16 4:30pm LENT.5 - 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 "Alas, And Did My Savior Bleed" ELH #282 (TUNE #218)

1. Alas! and did my- Savior bleed, - And did my Sov'reign die?
Would He devote that sacred Head - For sin-ners- such as I?
2. This Body slain, sweet- Jesus, Thine - And bathed in Its own Blood,
While all exposed to wrath divine, - The glor-ious- Sufferer stood!
3. Was it for crimes that- I had done - He groaned upon the Tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown, - And love- be-yond degree!
4. Well might the sun in- darkness hide - And shut his glories in
When God, the mighty Maker, died - For man- the- creature's sin.
5. Thus might I hide my- blushing face - While His dear Cross appears,
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, - And melt- mine- eyes in tears.
6. But drops of grief can- ne'er repay - The debt of love I owe;
Dear Lord, renew my faith today, - And teach- me- what to do. (Amen)

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.

The 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, for-ev-er-more. - A-men.*



Here are the words to **Psalm 143** - Please READ along!

✠ p.1 ✠ (words of Psalm 143 on next page ↗)

P: Hear my prayer, O LORD, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, And in Your righteousness.

C: Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

³ *For the enemy has persecuted my soul; He has crushed my life to the ground; He has made me dwell in darkness, Like those who have long been dead.*

⁴ **Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; My heart within me is distressed.**

⁵ *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.*

⁶ **I spread out my hands to You; My soul longs for You like a thirsty land.**

⁷ *Answer me speedily, O LORD; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit.*

⁸ **Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.**

⁹ *Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; In You I take shelter.*

¹⁰ **Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.**

¹¹ *Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake! For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.*

¹² **In Your mercy cut off my enemies, And destroy all those who afflict my soul; For I am Your servant.**

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

PASSION HISTORY: 6TH READING ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Jesus Suffering & Crucifixion

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

SERMON HYMN Chief of Sinners Though I Be ELH #429 TUNE: GETHSEMANE

1. Chief of sinners though I be, - Jesus shed His blood for me;
Died that I might live on high, - Lived that I might never die,
As the branch is to the vine, - I am His, and He is mine.
2. Oh, the height of Jesus' love! - Higher than the heavens above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, - Lasting as eternity.
Love that found me--wondrous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.
3. Jesus only can impart - Balm to heal the smitten heart;
Peace that flows from sin forgiven, - Joy that lifts the soul to heaven;
Faith and hope to walk with God - In the way that Enoch trod.
4. Chief of sinner though I be, - Christ is All in all to me;
All my wants to Him are known, - All my sorrows are His own.
Safe with Him from earthly strife, - He sustains the hidden life.
5. O my Savior, help afford - By Thy Spirit and Thy Word!
When my wayward heart would stray, - Keep me in the narrow way;
GRACE IN TIME OF NEED SUPPLY - WHILE I LIVE AND WHEN I DIE.

IRONIES OF THE PASSION TODAY (#6) Luke 23:39-43 "DON'T YOU FEAR GOD?"

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.

NUNC DIMITTIS ("Lord, Let Us Depart in Peace" ...music on page 124)

**C: ♪ 1. Lord, now You let Your servant ... de-part in peace:
Accord-... -ing to Your Word.**

**2. For mine eyes have seen... Your Sal-va-tion;
Which You have prepared before the face... of all peo-ple.**

**3. A- Light to light- ... -en the Gen-tiles:
And the glory of Your... peo-ple Isra-el.**

4. Glory be to the Father ... and to the Son / And to... the Holy Ghost;

5. As it was in the beginning, is now, and.. ever shall be / Forev-.. er-more, A-men.

**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 (Congregation pray, say together, ♪ Sung Amen.)

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, ♪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 "Abide With Me" ELH #561 Sing (odd) verses 1, 3, 5, 7

**1. Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide; - The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee, - Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!**

**3. Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word, - But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free. - Come not to sojourn, but abide with me.**

**5. Thou on my head in every youth didst smile, - And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee. - On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.**

7. I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless; Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.

Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still if Thou abide with me. (Amen)

SIXTH PASSION READING ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ Jesus' Suffering & Crucifixion

Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with Him to be executed. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means, "The place of a skull."). They offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. They crucified Him there with the criminals, one on His right and the other on His left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Now it was the third hour when they crucified Him. Pilate also had a sign written and fastened to the Cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" *(continued ↗)*

(LENT.5W) WED. Luke 23:39-43 **“DON’T YOU FEAR GOD?”** 03.14.16 OSL

INTRODUCTION Do you know who **Chester A. Arthur & Julia Sands** are? Unless you’re a history teacher, you probably don’t. Chester A. Arthur was the **21st president of the United States**. He took over when President **James Garfield** was assassinated in 1881. His career took an ironic twist when he inherited the presidency. You see, no one expected him to ever be president. He was only put on the ticket to heal a split in the Republican party. Even though Arthur had been a Republican for years, the previous president - also a Republican - had fired him from his job as the collector of customs in New York City. That was the richest government job in America then, and it was considered to be a fountain of corruption. He didn’t do anything strictly illegal, but Arthur made a lot of money there. He hired a lot of Republican cronies to unnecessary, well-paying jobs. So when the brand new president died, many people thought the best thing Arthur could do for America would be to resign. However, a young woman named Julia Sands wrote him a series of letters calling on him to defy everyone’s expectations and be a good president. Arthur took her letters to heart and persuaded Congress to pass reform legislation that included his old job, and then he vigorously enforced that legislation. He shocked friend and foe alike by permanently changing the way American government ran. This evening, we have before us another man whose words would’ve shocked anyone who knew him. Those words are tonight’s **Irony of the Passion**: THEME **Don’t you fear God?** (READ TEXT)

I. Unlike the story of President Arthur, the account of the criminal who said these words is well-known, even though we don’t actually know his name. But don’t let familiarity blind you to the irony in these words: **“Don’t you fear God?” -- A dying criminal came to faith on a cross.**

You know where we are in the story: Pilate finally condemned Jesus to die, and the Roman soldiers marched him out to Calvary. Now ordinarily there was a delay between the time when the sentence was passed and when it was finally carried out, but the Jewish leaders wanted Jesus dead that day. Even more important, God’s plan was for His Son to die on that Friday, so Jesus went immediately to the Cross. On that day there were two other criminals in prison awaiting execution. Since the Romans were going to all the trouble to crucify Jesus, they went ahead and crucified those guys too. It was, after all, the most efficient thing to do. (And, Romans knew about efficiency in torture and crucifixion.)

As soon as He was nailed to His Cross, Jesus’ enemies began to mock Him. **“If You are the Christ, save yourself!”** And both of these criminals joined in. Luke tells us that they even echoed the words of the Jewish leaders: **“Aren’t You the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”** You may have noticed that Luke says one criminal said that, but Matthew and Mark tell us that both criminals mocked Jesus. So both men started out, at least, saying things like this. What better way to mock Jesus than to throw His own words back in his face? **“Come on, Christ! Use that miraculous power of yours and save yourself and us!”** Jesus was indeed the Christ, the promised Savior of Israel, and He could have come down from that Cross. The reason he didn’t was to save sinners like those men who were dying with Him. **...and sinners like US!**

What kind of men were these criminals? The Bible doesn’t spell out their crimes, but the Greek words it uses to describe them imply not only stealing but also violence, maybe even murder. These men were habitual offenders. **They deserved the death penalty.** But without any warning, one of them asked the other, **“Don’t you fear God . . . since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”** Don’t you fear God? **Where did that question come from?** If either of these men had feared God, they wouldn’t have lived the way they did! But they were about to die. And God wrote into the heart of every human being a knowledge that God is going to judge us all when we die. So even in a hardened criminal, fear of facing God is not all that unusual.

The really amazing thing is that **that wasn’t the only thing** this criminal confessed. **He trusted in Jesus to take him to Heaven when this horrible experience was over.** How did he come to know his Savior? You can point to the fact that most Jews were raised with religious instruction and that Jesus was the most famous man in Israel during the three years of his ministry. This man probably heard about some of what Jesus was teaching. He heard Jesus speak to the people on the way to Calvary and even ask God to forgive the soldiers who nailed Him to His Cross. Yet up until this moment, it doesn’t seem like any of it had sunk in. But now, as he was hanging from his own cross, the Holy Spirit worked through the Gospel he had heard in the synagogue, in the stories about Jesus, and in the words and actions of Christ that this criminal had heard and seen as he walked with Jesus to the cross. **Through that Gospel, the Holy Spirit reached into his heart and gave him faith right there on his own cross.** (no atheists in foxholes...or on crosses?)

(LAW) **God has done the very same thing for you and me.** Now does that seem like kind of a forced comparison? When you look at this man dying because of robbery and violence and maybe even murder, do you see yourself? Or do you think it’s obvious that you aren’t the kind of sinner he was? The truth is, you are. We are all sinners from birth. **The greatest lie of our age is that we’re good people by nature.** Our culture believes that there’s a little good in all of us. If there are really bad people out there, they are limited to child molesters and drug dealers. But you know what? It’s all an illusion. Even though we’ve managed to keep from murdering anyone, we’ve all hated someone. We’ve all wanted them to get what we think they have coming. Even though we may never have stolen anything, have we ever been lazy at work? Have we ever been envious of what other people have? Have we ever resented the fact that God was more generous to other people than he was to us? To God, those sins of the heart are just as evil as the sins people act out. **We are all robbers and murderers at heart.** The sin in our hearts contaminates everything we say and do. We are just as guilty as these (2) men were, and we deserve the death and the hell that they deserved.

(GOSPEL) However, **God has been every bit as generous to us as he was to that criminal. Jesus paid for all** our hatred and murder, for all our greed and robbery, for all our sin. His Blood washed it all away. He promises us what He promised that criminal - **Paradise with Him.** The same Holy Spirit worked through that same Gospel to give us the same faith in our Savior as

this dying criminal had. No one who knew this criminal would've expected him to make this confession. No one who truly understands how sinful our hearts are can fail to be surprised by God's grace when **He gave us faith.**

II. Obviously, this man knew he was dying, and without that realization, he might never have come to see what the Gospel promised him. Do you ever wonder how you would feel if you knew exactly when you were going to die? I wonder if I would show the faith this man showed when he asked, **"Don't you fear God?"** A dying Christian trusted in God in the face of death.

From the moment it all started, this criminal knew what he was in for. In all that pain, he found strength and comfort in Christ. He didn't ask to be rescued from the cross. He didn't try to bargain with Jesus and promise to turn over a new leaf. He didn't even ask Jesus to spare him some of the pain. He did ask only one thing: *"Jesus, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom."* **He asked to go home to Heaven.**

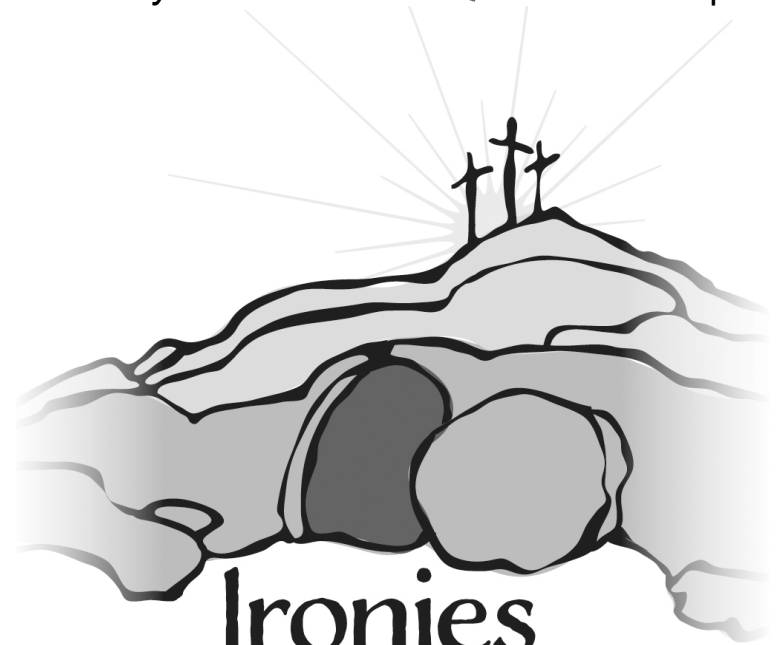
And Jesus said, *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."* That very day he would leave behind all that sin does to people here on earth and go home. **He would be with Christ in Heaven.** That is the greatest joy of eternal life. And as this Christian hung on his own cross, as the hours dragged on and the pain increased, as Pilate gave the order for that final act of brutality and his life slipped away, **the promise of the Gospel kept his faith alive and brought him Home.** That same Gospel led God (the Holy Spirit) to call another sinner to repent while he still had the physical strength. **That is perhaps the last irony of this account.** Who would ever expect a man in this situation to **witness to Christ?** But God does wonderful, unexpected things even in the darkest moments.

In this man's final confession, we have a reminder that we too have **our crosses. There is so much pain in this life.** And even if we don't face such horrible deaths, some of us may face pain that seems just as bad - unfaithful spouses, children who abandon us, abuse from parents, or addiction to drugs or alcohol. All the pain and sorrow of this life **attack us and our faith.** God never promised us that we would avoid the crosses He lays on us.

However, He did promise to **limit our crosses to no more than what we can stand** - like He did when he limited this man's crucifixion to only one day. And God promises to give us the **strength we need to endure them.** Today, as we meditate on Christ dying for us and as we hear His promise that on the day this life ends we will see Him in Paradise, God works in our hearts. **He comforts us with His love.** And He even gives us the strength **to share our faith with those around us.** When the time comes, those we love will take great comfort in hearing our confession that we are going home to Christ. Between now and then, God gives us the strength even in the most painful moments to point to our Savior.

CONCLUSION **It is truly amazing what God does for us.** No one who followed Jesus out to Calvary that day expected to hear the confession this criminal gave. He didn't expect to give it himself when he began that last walk of his life. **But God does miracles.** He takes sinners like us and makes us His children. **And He even carries us through death itself to eternal life.** Trust in Him, today and always. **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



Ironies of the Passion

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