

7th Reading: "Father, Into Your Hands I Commend My Spirit."

HYMN VERSE (a capella) "On My Heart Imprint Thine Image" TLH #179

**On my heart imprint Thine image,
Blessed Jesus, King of Grace.
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Have no pow'r Thee to efface.
This the superscription be:
'Jesus, Crucified for me
Is my Life, my Hope's foundation
And my glory and Salvation.' A-men.**

The Account of the Burial of Jesus (John 19:38-42)

John 19:38-42 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the Body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the Body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus' Body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

(Darkness - Extinguishing of Christ Candle and Covering Cross)

The Harsh Noise

After the Harsh Noise, the usher (Our pastor) will begin dismissing the congregation. We ask that you depart the worship-space in silence.



We hope all will return for the Festival of the RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, EASTER DAY, MARCH 27TH! Our Festival Worship is (normal time of) 9:30AM! Easter Breakfast will be served starting at 8:15am in the fellowship hall.

✘ **The Divine Service on Good Friday + March 25th, 2016** ✘
OPENING HYMN "Come to Calvary's Holy Mountain" TLH #149 (4 verses)

1. Come to Calvary's holy mountain, - Sinners, ruined by the Fall;
Here a pure and healing fountain - Flows to you, to me, to all,
In a full, perpetual tide, - Opened when our Savior died.
2. Come in povety and meanness, - Come defiled, without, within;
From infection and uncleanness, - From the leprosy of sin,
Wash your robes and make them white; - Ye shall walk with God in light.
3. Come in sorrow and contrition, - Wounded, impotent, and blind;
Here the guilty free remission, - Here the troubled peace, may find.
Health this fountain will restore; - He that drinks shall thirst no more.
4. He that drinks shall live forever; - Tis a soul-renewing flood.
God is faithful; God will never - Break His covenant of blood,
SIGNED WHEN OUR REDEEMER DIED, - SEALED WHEN HE WAS GLORIFIED. A-MEN.

The INVOCATION (Congregation please rise.)

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son ✘ and of the Holy Spirit. C: Amen.

The KYRIE ELEISON

P: Kyrie eleison.

C: Lord, have mercy upon us.

P: Christe eleison.

C: Christ, have mercy upon us.

P: Kyrie eleison.

C: 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, Amen.**

P: Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.

C: Almighty God, we pray that You would graciously behold this, Your family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed into the hands of wicked men and to suffer death upon the cross; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. Amen.

PASSION HISTORY: FINAL READING ✘ *Crucifixion, Death and Burial of Jesus.*

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

SERMON HYMN *Go to Dark Gethsemane TLH #159 (4 verses) J.MONTGOMERY*

1. Go to dark Gethsemane, - Ye that feel the Tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see, - Watch with Him one bitter hour;
Turn not from His griefs away, - Learn of Jesus Christ to pray. (vv.2-4 ↗)

↗ ...Go to Dark Gethsemane (continued, verses 2-4)

2. Follow to the Judgment-hall, - View the Lord of Life arraigned;
Oh, the wormwood and the gall! - Oh, the pangs His soul sustained!
Shun not suffering, shame, or loss; - Learn of Him to bear the cross.

3. Calvary's mournful mountain climb; - There, adoring at His feet,
Mark that miracle of time, - God's own sacrifice complete.
"It is finished!" hear Him cry; - Learn of Jesus Christ to die.

4. Early hasten to the tomb - Where they laid His breathless clay;
All is solitude and gloom, -- Who hath taken Him away?

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE MEETS OUR EYES. - SAVIOR, TEACH US SO TO RISE. A-MEN.

SERMON (L-2016) "*IRONIES OF THE PASSION*" Matt.27:62-66 "*I WILL RISE AGAIN*"

The OFFERING is taken after the Sermon

 **II. The Service of † Tenebrae** 

PREPARATION & EXPLANATION of THE SERVICE OF TENEBRAE

OPENING HYMN: "*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*" TLH #172, verses 1&3

1. O sacred Head, now wounded, - With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded - With thorns, Thine only crown.
O sacred Head, what glory, - What bliss, till now was Thine!
Yet, though despised and gory, - I joy to call Thee mine.
3. Now from Thy cheeks has vanished - Their color, once so fair;
From Thy red lips is banished - The splendor that was there.
Grim Death, with cruel rigor, - Hath robbed Thee of Thy life;
Thus Thou has lost Thy vigor, - Thy strength, in this sad strife.

1st Reading: "Father, Forgive Them, For They Do Not Know What They Do."

HYMN VERSE "*Jesus Sinners Does Receive*" TLH #324 VERSE 2

2. We deserve but grief and shame
Yet His words rich grace revealing
Pardon, peace and life proclaim,
Here their ills have perfect healing.
Who with humble hearts believe
Jesus sinners doth receive.

(first lights dim...)

2nd Reading: "I Tell You The Truth, TODAY You Will Be With Me In Paradise"

HYMN VERSE "*Christ, the Life of all the Living*" TLH #151 VERSE 1

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 suff'rings, death and merit
I eternal life inherit:

Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee! (second lights dim...)

✧ p.3 ✧

3rd Reading: "Woman, Behold Your Son." ... "Behold Your Mother!"

VERSES "*Near the Cross Stood Mary Weeping*" (NOT in TLH) verses 1&3

TUNE: (TLH #425) "*All Depends on Our Possessing*" (some lights dim...)

1. Near the Cross was Mary weeping,
There her mournful station keeping,
Gazing on her dying Son.
There with speechless grief oppresséd;
Anguish-stricken, and distresséd;
Through His soul the sword had gone.

3. When no eye its pity gave us,
When there was no arm to save us,
He His love and pow'r displayed.
By His stripes He wrought our healing,
By His death, our life revealing,
He for us the ransom paid.

4th Reading: "My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?"

(more lights dim...)

HYMN VERSES "*O Dearest Jesus*" TLH #143 VERSES 1 & 3

1. O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken?
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession -
What dark transgression?

3. Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?
It is my sins for which Thou Lord must languish.
Yea, all the wrath, the woe Thou dost inherit, - This I do merit.

5th Reading: "I Thirst." (more lights dim...)

HYMN "*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*" (TLH #172 - EXTRA VERSE)

Love caused Thine incarnation - Love brought Thee down to me.
Thy thirst for my Salvation - Procured my liberty.
O love, beyond all telling - That led Thee to embrace
In love, all loves excelling, - Our lost and fallen race.

6th Reading: "It Is Finished!" (most lights dim...)

HYMN VERSE "*O Help Us, Christ*" (TUNE: #644 "Praise God From Whom")

O help us, Christ, our Hope in loss;
Thou hast redeemed us by Thy Cross
From endless death and misery.
We praise, we bless, we worship Thee.

✧ p.4 ✧

(Almost all lights dim...)

**History of Suffering & Death of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Four Evangelists + The Wartburg Project Version© 2014.**

7TH & FINAL PASSION HISTORY READING ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ Jesus' Burial

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the council, was a good and righteous man. He had not agreed with their plan and action. He was looking forward to the Kingdom of God. He boldly went to Pilate and asked for the Body of Jesus.

Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had been dead for a long time. When he learned it from the centurion, he granted the Body to Joseph. Joseph bought a linen cloth, came and took Jesus' Body away. Nicodemus, who earlier had come to Jesus at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about sixty-five pounds.

They took Jesus' Body and wrapped it along with the spices in linen cloths, according to Jewish burial custom. There was a garden at the place where Jesus was crucified. And in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. So because it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. Joseph took the Body and laid it in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock. He rolled a large stone over the tomb's entrance and left.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee, followed after Joseph and observed the tomb and at how His Body was laid. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus were watching where He was laid. They returned and prepared spices and perfumes. On the Sabbath they rested according to the Commandment.

On the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered in the presence of Pilate and said, "Sir, we remembered what that deceiver said while He was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give a command that the tomb be made secure until the Third Day. Otherwise His disciples might steal His Body and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' And this last deception will be worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and posting a guard.

(Here ends the Seventh and Final Passion History Reading)



GF. GOOD FRIDAY Matthew 27:62-66 J: "I WILL RISE AGAIN" 03.25.16 OSL

INTRODUCTION This year we've spent the entire Lenten season meditating on the **IRONIES of Jesus' Passion**. Again and again, we've seen people say surprising things. We've encountered the unexpected and even the absurd. Tonight we have **one more irony** to consider: the words of Jesus' enemies once He was in the grave. Jesus' death didn't happen exactly the way they had wanted it to. They ended up killing him at the least opportune moment, during the Passover festival when Jerusalem was full of visitors. They had ultimately gotten the job done though. Jesus was safely in the tomb. They could breathe a sigh of relief and go on with their lives. However, one nagging doubt still remained. G.F. THEME & IRONY: **He said, "I WILL RISE AGAIN."**

I. One of the great ironies of Jesus' Passion is how often His enemies **said things that were actually true**. Here, **whenever** it was that they came, they were certain that Jesus was still in the grave. Otherwise, their request would make no sense. So they came and told Pilate something the governor probably didn't know: **He said, "I WILL RISE AGAIN." That would be a horror for Jesus' enemies!**

They were so afraid of the promise Jesus had made that they risked their celebration of one of the most important Sabbaths of the year - the one during the weeklong Festival of Unleavened Bread. Now they gathered together and risked that uncleanness once more, because they had to put this doubt to rest.

(And,) What did they say to Pilate? "*We remember that while He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'*" Of course, **they were totally right**. Jesus had said this. Unfortunately, they didn't believe it for a minute. They called Jesus "that deceiver." They were already trying to control the message and spin the events the way they needed them to go, **but this prophecy terrified them**. They understood that if Jesus really rose, then everything that he had ever said about himself would have to be true. That would've been a horror for them, because that would mean that they had been wrong for three years - wrong for all their lives as they taught what they thought God had said. So they wouldn't allow themselves to imagine even for a moment the possibility **that Jesus would really rise from the dead**. They were terrified, however, that His disciples would come during the middle of the night, steal His body, and then tell the world that Jesus had risen.

So they went to Pilate and pretended like they had seen eye-to-eye all along. They explained their concerns, and Pilate gave them a truly ironic answer. "*Take a guard. ... Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.*" After all the static they had given him on Friday, Pilate could've told them, "*Too bad! That's your problem!*" But he didn't. Someone might argue that he was a realist. However, there was more to it than that. The Jews had told Pilate that **Jesus claimed to be the Son of God**. And he had asked Jesus, "*Where do You come from?*" Now, Pilate needed Jesus to stay dead. He needed to know he had put to death a teacher, a revolutionary, a troublemaker - even an **innocent man - anything but the Son of God**.

So he gave them everything they wanted. **Roman soldiers**, not Jewish temple guards, secured the tomb. They stood watch throughout the day and night. They even put a wax seal on the stone to show that it had not been moved. **Pilate and the Jews thought they had all the bases covered.** When three days were done, they would be able to show everyone that the tomb was still sealed and Jesus had **NOT** risen from the dead. Hopefully **then**, this problem would go away.

They exerted all this effort just to keep Jesus' Words from becoming reality. The terror those words inspired in their hearts should have told them that they were indeed true. In fact, I think it did tell them. I think they knew all along that Jesus was going to rise, but their hearts were so hardened with sin and unbelief that they had no choice but to try and stop it. You know why I think that? Because they actually had to face that reality on Sunday. When Jesus did rise, when they couldn't deny it because the Roman soldiers had told them what had happened, do you know what the Jewish leaders did? They bribed those soldiers to tell everyone they had fallen asleep and the disciples came and stole his body during the night. That's how hard their hearts were. It shows that deep inside, they really feared more than just the people being led astray. They feared that they were wrong. They feared that Jesus would win. They feared that because they had no faith. Jesus winning meant they would go to hell. So they went to all this trouble to keep Jesus' words from becoming reality. What a sad irony!

II. They couldn't keep Jesus from rising - no matter how many soldiers stood guard outside and no matter how thick the wax was. Even if they had had an entire army trying to hold the rock down and a mountain of concrete poured on top of it - when that angel came down early Sunday morning, he was going to open the tomb and show the world that **Jesus was already gone.** He had **already Risen!** It was never God's plan to have the disciples steal the body. Jesus had told them God's plan. **He said, "I / WILL RISE AGAIN."** **That was the point of all Jesus suffered.**

Looking back on it today, we have to wonder about the disciples. If you page through the Gospels, you will see that Jesus said this over and over again. He kept making the statement more and more clear. He kept adding details. He told the disciples that He was going to be arrested and executed. Then He told them that on the Third Day He would rise from the dead. **The Irony is that they never figured out what He meant.** They kept thinking He was speaking in Parables, because it just didn't make sense for Him to plan to die. What kind of king would that be? What kind of conqueror dies? So ultimately the Irony here is that **Jesus' enemies took Him at His Word and trembled, but Jesus' friends tried to find some other explanation.**

So all this effort to guard and seal the tomb was wasted. The disciples had no intention of stealing Jesus' body. They didn't even understand until after Jesus Rose that that's what he always meant to do. And they were too stunned and shattered to think about plotting a deception. They loved Jesus. Now he was dead. That's all they were thinking about.

This is what sin does to us. If you're ever tempted to think that your **sins really aren't a big deal because there are so many worse people out there, stop and look at the Cross.** This is how seriously God takes our sin. God looks into our hearts, and what does He see? He sees sinful thoughts, desires, and feelings. And God condemns us for that. That doesn't seem fair to us. We say no one can tell us what to think or feel, but God does. God would send sinners to hell purely on the basis of sinful thoughts and feelings. Of course, where there are sinful thoughts and feelings, there are always sinful words and actions. Each of us is guilty. You might not like hearing that, but on Good Friday, it's undeniable. On Good Friday, we see Jesus doing what every sinner has to do: **He died.** The reason we die is because we are guilty of sin.

However, Jesus died in our place. He was buried where we will have to lie. Yet that wasn't the end. If the story ended with the watch and the seal, then, my friends, there would be no reason for us to ever gather here. The best we could do in life would be to enjoy what little we can before we go to hell. Jesus had a greater purpose. He came to rise. And the watch and seal are actually steps toward that resurrection. They prove that no one stole the body! Jesus stayed there in the grave until early Sunday morning and then He Rose.

Because He Rose, we know that all the suffering, the death, and all the hell Jesus experienced on Good Friday were enough. They paid for our sins, and we are forgiven. **Jesus' Resurrection is like our receipt that proves that He paid all that you owe.** Now we are free and clear. Because Jesus rose, we trust that someday we will rise. These bodies will only fall into the grave if we die before he comes back. But even if we do, He will raise these bodies when He returns, **and we will live with him in joy forever.** Then, my friends, there will be no sin and death ever again.

CONCLUSION **That was God's and Jesus' Plan from before He was even born. It was the Triune God's Plan before He created the world.** But at the moment when the tomb was sealed, those who loved Him couldn't see God's plan. All they knew was that **their Lord was dead.** All they experienced was darkness. I think we can understand their sorrow, but on Easter Sunday, the darkness ended. God brought them out of the darkness of sin and into the light of life. **That is what Good Friday is all about. Jesus leads us out of the darkness.** That was what **He always planned to do.**

Tonight, we're observing our annual Tenebrae service. *Tenebrae* is Latin for "darkness." We darken our sanctuary and worship in shadows. At the end of our service, the acolyte will finally extinguish the Christ candle, and we will be plunged into complete darkness. **That candle represents the life of Christ going out.** But then, we will hear a loud noise called **the strepitus.** *Strepitus* means "crashing." That crash represents the rending of the tomb - the angel rolling back the stone to show the world the risen Christ. Because we know our Jesus is no longer dead. **He lives! And, because He lives, we too will live. Thanks be to God Who gives us the Victory in Jesus! Amen. SDG**

AN EXPLANATION OF THE SUFFERING AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST -by Johann Gerhard, excerpts

INTRODUCTION We should first consider the outward poverty of Christ, in that He hangs naked and uncovered on the timber-trunk of the Cross. During His entire life, the beloved Lord was extremely poor. Thus He also desired that His departure from life would be in keeping with His prior mode of living. His life was poor and toilsome. But now in death even His insignificant bits of clothing are taken from Him and divided among the soldiers. Yet through this poverty of Christ we have become rich. The first man was created by God as a rich lord. He was clothed in soul and body with temporal blessings. His soul was adorned with the beautiful cloak of innocence and righteousness. His body was attired in immortality. Everything upon earth was placed under his charge so that he should be lord over all. However, he allowed the Devil to take all this from him. And thus he, along with all his descendants, became poor and naked in body, soul, and temporal blessings to the extent that in God's eyes we are miserably and pathetically poor, blind and naked. To help us out of this outward poverty and nakedness, behold, God's Son thus gives Himself over to external poverty, even though He is Lord of both heaven and earth. The One who clothed the entire earth allows Himself to be stripped naked on the cross, so that He might regain for us our lost blessings and prepare for us again the robe of righteousness and immortality.

I. "Father, Forgive Them, For They..."

It is recorded that Christ prayed for His crucifiers: "*Father forgive them, for they do not know what they do,*" - the first Word which Christ spoke on the Cross. In the Old Testament, as the sacrifice was being offered, the high priest at the same time had to instruct the people about its true benefit. Christ, the High Priest of the New Testament, also does this; and He teaches that His sacrifice is intended for the forgiveness of sins. Ponder here also the incomprehensible patience of Christ, how He in His distress prays for His worst enemies. They had affixed Him with nails so that He could do no other good for them. Only His tongue remained, yet, he used it still to pray for His crucifiers. How distant are those from this example of Christ who do not pray for their enemies. Even more distant are those who return evil with evil. Farthest away of all are those who deliberately offend their neighbors. From this God graciously preserve us. **Amen. (pp.243-244)**

II. "I Tell You The Truth, TODAY..."

As Christ entered into Jerusalem, they shouted to Him: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord; but now they shout; Crucify Him! There they shouted: Blessed is the King of Israel; here, We have no king but Caesar. There they carried olive and palm branches before Him; here they see to it that He is crowned with thorns. There they spread their own garments before Him; here they demand that Christ be stripped of His garments. There they cheered with Christ's apostles and ran with joy around the Lord Christ; here

they placed Christ between two murderers and with violence led Him out of the town. (p. 185)

At the outset both criminals had maligned the Lord Christ, but later one was converted. The Holy Spirit worked a genuine conversion in his heart, so that he ceases his slander. He rebukes the other criminal, saying: "*Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.*" Then he said to Jesus, "*Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom,*" and immediately obtains from the Lord the comforting declaration: Assuredly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise. ...

Along with this contrition and inner faith of heart there was also the **outward confession of the mouth**, and indeed a marvelous and glorious confession it was. ... This is a much more glorious faith and confession than if he had confessed Christ as the Son of God while He manifested His power with teaching and miracles. (pp. 268-270) **Thanks be to God.**

III. "Woman, Behold Your Son." "Behold Your Mother!"

Even though the Lord Christ hangs on the Cross in utter shame and scorn, even so, some find themselves steadfastly keeping watch by the Cross and awaiting the end. The evangelists particularly remember Mary, the mother of the Lord. What pain and anguish this must have been for her can best be comprehended by a true mother's heart; here was richly fulfilled what Simeon had earlier proclaimed: "Behold, a sword is going to pierce through your soul." However, God's might manifests itself in the midst of her weakness. It gives her strength to bear this overwhelming agony. As the Lord Jesus now takes notice of her, as well as of His beloved disciple John, He says to her: Woman, behold, your Son. He does not call her "mother" because He did not wish to distress her even more by calling her by that most intimate name, "Mother." With this statement He commends her to His beloved disciple John. In the same manner He says to John: Behold, your mother. With these words He commends His beloved mother to him, so that they might mutually have each other for comfort, protection and help. (pp. 258-261) **Thanks be to God.**

IV. "My God, My God, Why...?!"

We cannot comprehend the anguish of Christ, for it is with us just as it was with the apostles, who slept and slumbered ... Even so, we must speak of it, for this is the greatest suffering of Christ; namely, His spiritual agony and the hidden burden of the heart. Therefore, just as He began His suffering with such spiritual suffering, ... so He also concluded it with spiritual suffering, as it is reported that He cried out: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

When other saintly martyrs were led to their death, they were joyful and confident, how is it that the Son of God here shivers and is in such agony? The reason is this: at that time, He was burdened with the sin of all mankind and with the wrath of God and agony of hell. For as Christ loaded upon Himself all sin, God the Lord thus speaks to His Son in wrath and enters into judgment with Him. On the cross God looks upon His Son in wrath and let His voice issue forth

in fury. ... In His wrath God truly viewed Christ as the greatest of all sinners — not on account of His own person, but because He had loaded upon Himself the sin of the world. God turned His face away from Christ, and set before Him an entire ocean of wrath, permitting death, Devil, and hell to vent all their might against this Person, which they otherwise would have vented against the human race. **(63-65)**

That the sun is now here darkened signifies that the agony and darkness of hell fell upon the Lord Christ for the sake of our sins so that we might come to eternal light. We had altogether deserved to be cast into the eternal darkness. But then Christ stepped into our place, allowed darkness and the agony of hell to come over Him so that we might be freed from it. **(274-275) Thanks be to God.**

V. "I Thirst."

God gave the Jews a law which stated that if someone was to be scourged because of an offense which was not actually worthy of death, then such a person was not to be whipped with more than forty stripes or lashes. However, with the Romans this mitigation was not taken into consideration. Instead, they took the person they were going to scourge and tied him to a column. They stripped Him of His clothes and with whips made of braided cords, dealt with him horribly. According to such a Roman practice was the Lord Christ scourged. ... To sum up, did whatever they could think of outwardly to mock and plague the Lord Christ.

We had all deserved this hellish thirst, for since our first parents ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree, they, along with all their descendants, deserved to be delivered into such an eternal thirst. But we now are now rescued and, in contrast, are given to drink of the rich blessings of God's House, and to drink with bliss as by a stream. This is why Christ suffers such a thirst in His suffering. Christ thirsted for our salvation and eternal bliss. **(278&279) Thanks be to God.**

VI. "IT IS FINISHED!"

We must especially take note of this point, so that we do not see in this only how Christ was unmercifully and unjustly dealt with by the Jews and Pilate. Rather, we are at all times to remember God's hand and counsel in all this. Neither the Jews nor Pilate would have been able to hurt even a single hair of Christ had God not previously ordained that He was going to allow all this to happen. If we then have come this far in our contemplation of Christ's suffering, it will thus be easy to see that God must have had solemn and weighty reasons to permit His only-begotten Son to be given over as plunder and allow Him to be so pitifully disfigured by them. The Scriptures report that all this happened solely and simply **for our sake** - that in this our sins have been paid for by Christ, and that by His suffering and death, righteousness, life, and salvation were won **for us** by Him. **(pp. 206-207)**

When Jesus then had drunk of the vinegar, He said: **"IT IS FINISHED"** ... With this He declares that everything has now been accomplished and fulfilled. Christ had preached to His disciples about His impending suffering, saying:

Everything that is written about the Son of Man will be accomplished. Here He says: *It is accomplished, it is finished.* He **now had completely paid for everything** of which we were guilty, and had completely won for us that which was required for our salvation. ... Thus, we need no other sacrifice, no other payment for sin. His offering is a complete Sacrifice; His payment is a complete payment; He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Initiator and the One who completes...our faith and our Salvation. **(pp. 281-282) Thanks be to God.**

VII "Father, into Your Hands..."

Christ shouts out loudly and says: *"Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit!"* which was the final word of Christ from the Cross. Christ shouted out so loudly, and His clear voice causes Death to tremble, telling Death that it may now step forth and carry out upon Him the right and power that it usually held over the human race.

Christ gave up His spirit, thus proving in deed what He said: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." With us humans it is ordained that in death our souls will be taken from us. At that time the soul must leave and vacate the shelter of the body, whether it does so willingly or not. But with Christ it is different; He gives up His spirit, for He is not dying out of necessity or by force. Instead He willingly endured Death. It had no claim over Him. As Death takes Him on and kills Him, it thereby loses the power it had over us on account of sin. ... Furthermore, in this last word Christ calls God His Father that we understand that now **God's wrath is over and done with**. Earlier, He cried out: My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Now, as Christ sees that everything is accomplished and that He had fulfilled everything pertaining to the Redemption of the human race, He once more addressed God as His own dearly beloved Father and commended His soul into His hands. Just as one dear friend entrusts something to another, turning it over into his hands to protect it, and which he later intends to reclaim, so also Christ does here. He commends His soul to His Father as a precious possession, because on the Third Day He intends to take it back again.

Since the Lord Christ was also speaking and acting on the Cross **as our High Priest, it follows** that Christ not only commended His own soul to His heavenly Father, but **also the souls of all believers**, who are Christ's members. He had, as it were, collected all the souls of believers into a single bundle with His own Soul. ... So then, when the hour of death draws near, think on this: Christ already has commended your soul to God.

CONCLUSION After Christ then had spoken all these Words from the Cross, He thereupon bowed His Head and gave up His spirit. This bowing of the head indicated that as a final blessing He wanted to give us a kiss, thereby once more to demonstrate His heartfelt love.

We must not regard Christ's death as merely a human death; rather, God's Son dies! [God has died for you!] Accordingly, His death has such power that through it we are reconciled with God and are cleansed of our sins. ... By the death of Christ, death is killed. **(pp. 282-283) Thanks be to God, IJ'N!**