

The Jesus We Need – The Good News We Need

The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Greetings in the name of our Savior Jesus: Our world has stopped (for the most part) because of a global health crisis. While our physical health is important, our soul and our relationship with God is of greater importance. It is good for us to pause for a few moments each week, each day, for spiritual nourishment. It is worth it.

One great aspect of online services is the ability to comment and share these messages with friends online. Please take a moment today to invite family members or friends to view these messages.

The theme as you worship: The Jesus we need stepped down from his throne in heaven and selflessly served us. His suffering and selfless service inspires us to selfless service.

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M: We worship...In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 20:17-28

Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, ¹⁸ “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death ¹⁹ and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!” ²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. ²¹ “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” ²² “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. ²³ Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” ²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. ²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”



PRAYER

Lord, you showed your great love for me by stepping off your heavenly throne and serving me by living the life I couldn't and then giving me that life on the cross. Let me value that act of love so highly that I desire to show it in my own life. Bless our worship and speak to our hearts in your Word. Amen.

SONG

God's Own Child I Gladly Say It

♪ God's own child, I gladly say it:
I am baptized into Christ!
He, because I could not pay it,
Gave my full redemption price.
Do I need earth's treasures many?
I have one worth more than any
That brought me salvation free,
Lasting to eternity!

♪ Sin, disturb my soul no longer:
I am baptized into Christ!
I have comfort even stronger:
Jesus' cleansing sacrifice.
Should a guilty conscience seize me
Since my baptism did release me
In a dear forgiving flood,
Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood?

THE MESSAGE

Romans 8:1,2,8-10

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

⁸ Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. ⁹ You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness.

Theme: *The Good News We Need*

Introduction: We need some good news, right? We are looking for good news. I don't know about you, but when I scroll through the news headlines lately I catch myself looking for some news headline that doesn't have Coronavirus in it. I find you have to go pretty far down the list of headlines to find something that doesn't have to do with Coronavirus. We want something else. Ideally, we want good news.

The news outlets realize this too and so every now and again they'll sprinkle in some sort of silver lining to the Coronavirus pandemonium. One article showed an image that demonstrated how emissions in China had plummeted because all the factories were shut down. They were reporting clear skies instead of the haze that normally hangs over the Chinese city centers. The canals in Venice were crystal clear again. There was a "Clearwater Beach blue" to the normally dirty canal waters. You could see the fish swimming and the swans had returned to the canals. I'm sure it is remarkably pretty for those who live there. Good news. We want, we need good news.

I. Set Free from Sin by Jesus: COVID-19 and its effects on the globe have been a sobering reminder that we live in a world infected by sin. It reminds us that no matter how high the stock markets rise (and they were roaring just a few weeks ago), no matter how good life gets here on earth, God has a way of quickly reminding us, "In this world you will have trouble because of sin. He has certainly reminded us, and the whole world, that the world is surely groaning under the weight of sin.

In the St. Paul's letter to the Romans he was groaning under the weight of his sin. He took a personal look at his life. He tried to do what was right, but he looked at his life and he had failed to do what was right. In fact, the evil he had tried to avoid, he found himself doing just that. The sin in his own personal life made him look at himself and conclude, "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" He saw what a frail, pitiful, sinful human being he was. He needed rescue. "Who will rescue me?" he cries out.

Yet, yet, we find Paul to be incredibly optimistic today. Even though sin was a like a heavy anchor fastened to his ankle. Though there was evidence of his sin all around him, though there was evidence of a sinful world all around him, Paul bursts out with some of the most uplifting words in all of Scripture. Romans 8:1, "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Paul could revel in the best news of all, through faith in Jesus he was connected to the suffering, the dying and the rising of Christ Jesus his Savior. "Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life had set him free from the law of sin and death." The chains of sin and death were cut loose. He was free to serve his God. He was free to live life with a clear conscience knowing that sin and death didn't hold power over him.

We need this good news too, don't we? In a world where the consequences of sin are all too obvious to us. A pandemic, death tolls rising. Maybe we fear for our own health or the health of a loved one. We know our own flesh, the sinful nature we tow along with us through life, "The good I want to do, I don't do. The evil I don't want to do I keep on doing...Who will rescue me from this body of death?" Paul gives us the answer and we cry out with him, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord...There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus our Lord."



In baptism we were connected to Jesus' suffering, dying and rising from the dead. We are set free from the law of sin and death. "Romans 6:4, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live life."

So we say with the hymn writer: *Sin, disturb my soul no longer: I am baptized into Christ! I have comfort even stronger: Jesus' cleansing sacrifice. Should a guilty conscience seize me Since my baptism did release me In a dear forgiving flood, Sprinkling me with Jesus' blood? (v. 2)* Jesus blood cleanses us of all our sin. Our guilt is gone, we are set free from sin and its consequences. Death itself.

The hymn writer goes on: *Death, you cannot end my gladness: I am baptized into Christ! When I die, I leave all sadness To inherit paradise! Though I lie in dust and ashes Faith's assurance brightly flashes: Baptism has the strength divine To make life immortal mine.* With faith in Christ Jesus we have the assurance that one day all the sadness and sickness of this life will be gone and we will enter life immortal.

I love this last verse: *There is nothing worth comparing To this lifelong comfort sure! Open-eyed my grave is staring: Even there I'll sleep secure. Though my flesh awaits its raising, Still my soul continues praising: I am baptized into Christ; I'm a child of paradise!*

II. Given the Spirit of Jesus to Serve: Paradise is certainly not what we see around us today, stuck in our homes, sickness all around us. Nonetheless, through faith in Christ we are children of paradise. Our connection to Christ makes us children of paradise. The Spirit of life has worked faith in us. But notice in verses 9&10 what that means. The Spirit of Christ Jesus is in you. Remember Jesus' words, **"Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** ¹

Every day we tell ourselves things are going to be different, "I'm not going to be controlled by my sinful nature and make life about me. Today is going to be different, today I'm not going to take my family or spouse for granted, I'm going to be eager to serve them. I'm not going to act as though friends or family are a bother. When we thank God for the daily bread we have we aren't going to be thinking, 'a little more would be nice Lord.'"

Do you want to serve like Jesus? Set your eyes on your Savior Jesus. Set your eyes on the one who was willing to give up heaven come to this earth and wash dirty dusty feet, touch diseased lepers, and hang out with sinners. Do you want to serve like Jesus? Fix your eyes on Jesus who suffered, died and rose...for you! When frustration maybe sets in because it doesn't seem like your serving is going the way you hoped, remember who is at work in you. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you.

Our conference of presidents put out a memo this past week. It addressed the possibility of churches going online. They encouraged churches to follow the governments requests not to meet in groups of 50 or more, in some places 10 or more. While God tells us to gather and promises blessing through gathering, the church leaders pointed out that the government is not trying to restrict freedom of religion through this mandate, they are trying to protect people's health. They pointed out that the fourth and fifth commandment lead us to respect and honor those in authority and care for the bodily needs of others. They added that Jesus has given us an awesome and unique opportunity to love our neighbor through this pandemic. We have been set free to serve.

It starts in your home, caring for your spouse, moms caring for children, dads looking out for the spiritual welfare of their family, watching church with the family, reading a Bible story with them. It is sharing messages of good news with your neighbor, that in Christ Jesus we are set free from sin and death. Should the pandemic escalate to the point of overflowing hospitals, we need to be ready to care for the lonely and even the dying. To remind them that life immortal is theirs, through Jesus Christ, no matter what happens.

May the Spirit of Jesus that caused him to serve us in humility, be our inspiration during a time like this. May he help us remember that the power of his resurrection is at work in us in the kindness to our neighbor, in the cup of cold water to the child at night, in the invitation to hear good news with that friend. May his good news carry you through, "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Amen.

¹ [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Mt 20:26–28). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

OFFERING

“On the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money” –II Corinthians 16:2. Out of thanks to God, we set aside a regular offering to the Lord.

Peace Lutheran offers a secure Give by Text option. To donate via text, send the dollar amount you wish to give, including a dollar sign, to 888-314-2975. Example: \$40. You will receive a secure registration link.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Lord God, our Father in heaven, the Source of our hope, light, and truth, accept our humble praise. We come to you rejoicing, because we know that Your merciful ears are open to our prayers through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Knowing our many sins are forgiven, lead us away from the sins of the flesh and to set our minds on the things of the Spirit. Lift up our souls when we are in despair over our sin. As we face the perils of a pandemic, give us hope and confidence in Your wisdom and might, O Lord. Heal the afflicted and give courage to caretakers. Remind us continually that greatness in Your kingdom is determined on the basis of service to others.

Send us Your Holy Spirit to guide us into Your truth. Give us a spirit of service and sacrifice like Christ our Savior. Keep us from pride and envy. Give hope to the hopeless, healing to the sick, and the assurance of Your presence to the lonely.

All these petitions and our silent ones we bring before Your throne of mercy...*Silent Prayer*

THE LORD'S PRAYER

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

C: Amen.

CLOSING SONG

God's Own Child I Gladly Say It

♪ **Death, you cannot end my gladness:
I am baptized into Christ!
When I die, I leave all sadness
To inherit paradise!
Though I lie in dust and ashes
Faith's assurance brightly flashes:
Baptism has the strength divine
To make life immortal mine.**

♪ There is nothing worth comparing
To this lifelong comfort sure!
Open-eyed my grave is staring:
Even there I'll sleep secure.
Though my flesh awaits its raising,
Still my soul continues praising:
I am baptized into Christ;
I'm a child of paradise!

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OTHER READINGS FOR STUDY²

Read Psalm 42

1. Why is the Psalmist's soul downcast? (:2-4)
2. Even though his soul is downcast, what does he conclude?

Read Hosea 5:15-6:3

1. How had God threatened his people?
2. What did Hosea plead? (:1)
3. What was his confidence? (:2,3)

Read Matthew 20:17-28 (with children)

1. What was the "cup" of which Jesus spoke?
2. Why is pride such a dangerous sin?
3. How do Jesus' life and ministry provide a model for us?

² www.wels.net/worship/help/