



MY FLESH AND MY HEART MAY FAIL, BUT GOD IS THE

STRENGTH OF MY HEART

AND MY PORTION FOREVER.

PSALM 73:26

Sunday, February 25, 2024
2nd Sunday in Lent

Service Theme

RETHINKING SUFFERING UNDER THE CROSS

We know that the cross was an instrument of torture and execution. However, Scripture also uses the term “cross” to refer to any suffering that one endures because he is a believer: the painful denial of the desires of the flesh; ridicule and persecution from unbelievers; etc. This is one reason people reject religion. They see Christians struggling in life with these crosses, while non-Christians often seem perfectly happy. Even the prophet Jeremiah asked, “Why do all the faithless live at ease?” (12:1). Today, Jesus asks us to rethink suffering under the cross. It is not pointless pain. Our crosses are not how we pay for sin. Jesus already did that on his cross. Our crosses are not redemptive, but they are constructive. Any suffering unbelievers face is only bad, a foretaste of worse to come. But the suffering believers face under the cross is only good, a way Christ connects us tightly to himself with fire-tested faith.

Hymn

CW 465 Jesus, I My Cross Have Taken

**1 Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow you.
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
You on earth once suffered, too.
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,
All I've ever hoped or known;
Yet how rich is my condition!
God and heav'n are still my own.**

**2 Let the world despise and leave me;
They have left my Savior, too.
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
You are not, like them, untrue.
And since you have smiled upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends may shun me—
Show your face, and all is bright.**

**3 Go, then, earthly fame and treasure!
Come, disaster, scorn, and pain!
In your service pain is pleasure;
With your favor loss is gain.
I have called you Abba, Father!
You my all in all shall be.
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather;
All must work for good to me.**

**4 Haste, my soul, from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer.
All but heav'n is transitory;
God's own hand shall guide you there.
Soon shall end this earthly story;
Swift shall pass the pilgrim days,
Hope soon change to heav'nly glory,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise.**

Order of Service
Service of the Word (p.38)

M: The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give us strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER AND PRAISE
(CW p.39)

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

C: *(Sing)* **Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they who take refuge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues forever. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they who take refuge in him.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

(CW p.39)

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (Sing) Amen.

1st Lesson

Job 1:13-22 (EHV)

Job is given a heavy cross, but it does not crush his faith. Instead, God uses Job's cross to move Job to worship and praise the LORD.

¹³One day when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother, ^{14a}a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the female donkeys were grazing nearby, ¹⁵when the Sabeans swooped down and took them away. They put the servants to death with the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another servant came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the flocks and the servants and consumed them, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁷While he was still speaking, another servant came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and plundered the camels and took them away. They put the servants to death with the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

¹⁸While he was still speaking, another servant came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and were drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother. ¹⁹Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it collapsed on the young people, and they died, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”

²⁰Then Job stood up, tore his robe, and shaved his head. He fell to the ground and worshipped. ²¹Then he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will return. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. May the name of the LORD be blessed.”

²²In all this, Job did not sin or blame God.

Psalm 73

(Read Responsively)

M: A psalm by Asaph.

C: ¹Surely God is good to Israel, to the pure in heart.

M: ²But as for me, my feet almost slipped out from under me.

C: I almost lost my footing.

M: ³I even envied the arrogant when I observed the peace of the wicked.

C: ⁴For there are no struggles at their death. Their bodies are sturdy.

M: ⁵They do not have the trouble common to people. They are not plagued along with the rest of mankind.

C: ⁶Therefore pride is their necklace. They wear violence like clothing.

M: ⁷Their eyes bulge out of their fat. The schemes of their hearts step over boundaries.

C: ⁸They mock. They speak maliciously. From a high perch they threaten oppression.

M: ⁹They set their mouths against the heavens. Their tongues strut around on earth.

C: ¹⁰Therefore God's people turn to them, and they drink it all in.

M: ¹¹They say, "How can God know? Does the Most High have knowledge?"

C: ¹²See, this is what the wicked are like— secure forever, they increase in strength.

M: ¹³Have I really kept my heart pure for nothing? Have I kept my hands clean in vain?

C: ¹⁴I have been plagued all day. My punishment comes every morning.

M: ¹⁵If I had said, "I will speak like this," I would certainly have betrayed the circle of your children.

C: ¹⁶When I tried to understand this, it was very troubling to me,

M: ¹⁷until I went to the sanctuary of God. Then I understood their end.

C: ¹⁸Surely you place them on slippery places. You cause them to fall into destruction.

M: ¹⁹How quickly they come to ruin, completely destroyed by terrors! ²⁰They are like a dream when someone wakes up.

C: So when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them like an illusion.

M: ²¹Yes, my heart was bitter, and I was torn up inside.

C: ²²I was unthinking and ignorant. I was a dumb animal before you.

M: ²³Yet I am always with you. You hold me by my right hand.

C: ²⁴With your guidance you lead me, and afterward, you will take me to glory.

M: ²⁵Who else is there for me in heaven? And besides you, I desire no one else on earth.

C: ²⁶My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.

M: ²⁷No doubt about it! Those who are far from you will perish. You destroy all who commit adultery against you.

C: ²⁸As for me, God's nearness is good for me. I have made the LORD God my refuge, so that I can tell about all your works. Amen.

Second Lesson

Romans 5:1-11 (EHV)

St. Paul teaches that God works through our suffering to shape our Christian character and to lead us to cling to Christ's gracious promises.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice confidently on the basis of our hope for the glory of God.

³Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patient endurance, ⁴and patient endurance produces tested character, and tested character produces hope. ⁵And hope will not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us.

⁶For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him. ⁸But God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, it is even more certain that we will be saved from God's wrath through him. ¹⁰For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, it is even more certain that, since we have been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. ¹¹And not only is this so, but we also go on rejoicing confidently in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this reconciliation.

Verse of the Day

(CW p.40)

Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. (Mark 8:34)

(The Alleluias and Gospel responses are omitted during the season of Lent)

Gospel Lesson

Mark 8:31-38 (EHV)

Jesus teaches of the absolute necessity of the cross, both his and ours.

³¹Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. ³²He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men."

³⁴He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. ³⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? ³⁷Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸In fact, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

C: (sing) Praise be to you, O Christ!

Hymn

CW 434 Lord, You I Love with All My Heart

1 Lord, you I love with all my heart;
I pray you ne'er from me depart;
With tender mercies cheer me.
Earth has no pleasure I would share;
Heaven itself were void and bare
If you, Lord, were not near me.
And should my heart for sorrow break,
My trust in you no one could shake.
You are the treasure I have sought;
Your precious blood my soul has bought.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

2 Lord God, 'twas your rich bounty gave
My body, soul, and all I have
In this poor life of labor.
Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place
May glorify your lavish grace
And serve and help my neighbor.
Let no false doctrine me beguile;
Let Satan not my soul defile.
Give strength and patience unto me
To bear my crosses willingly.
Lord Jesus Christ, My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Forsake me not! I trust your Word.

3 Lord, let at last your angels come;
To Abram's bosom bear me home
That I may die unfearing.
And in its narrow chamber keep
My body safe in peaceful sleep
Until your reappearing.
And then from death awaken me
That my own eyes with joy may see,
O Son of God, your glorious face,
My Savior and my Fount of grace.
Lord Jesus Christ, My prayer attend, my prayer attend,
And I will praise you without end.

Sermon Text & Theme

Psalm 73:1, 23-28 ... The Blessing of being a Believer.

- 1) The LORD is always with you.
- 2) The LORD is your portion forever.

Apostles' Creed

(CW p.41)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

**and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and
the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

**the holy Christian Church, the communion
of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of
the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Offertory Prayer

Prayer of the Church

(CW p.42)

M: Lord God, our maker and preserver, we praise and thank you for all that you give us day after day.

C: **We are not worthy of all the mercies you show us.**

M: You have given us your precious Word to nourish our souls and to protect us from the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature.

C: We thank you for those who teach and preach your saving truth at this place and everywhere. Grant them a rich measure of patience, wisdom, and love.

M: Heavenly Father, we pray that you shield us from every kind of danger: sudden catastrophe, terrors of crime, and the pain of disease. Watch over those who travel by land, sea, and air. Keep our loved ones from whatever perils may threaten them.

C: Heal those who are sick, cheer those who are sad, calm those who are distressed, and comfort all who are old and infirm.

M: Bless our land, our people, and those who hold offices of high trust. Keep our government and schools upright and strong for the advancement of good citizenship and useful vocations, that we may enjoy your gifts of peace, security, and well-being.

C: Grant your blessing to every nation on earth. Where there are wars, may there be peace. Where there is hatred, let it be healed. Where there is poverty, danger, or disaster, come with your almighty power to help and restore.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: We bring these requests before you in the name of Jesus our Lord, and ask you to hear us. Take all that we have, our bodies and minds, our time and skills, our ministries and offerings, and use them to your glory.

C: We give ourselves to you that we may serve you in whatever way is pleasing in your sight. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(CW p.43)

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

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (sing) Amen.

Blessing

(CW p.44)

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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: (Sing) Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hymn

CW 429 What God Ordains Is Always Good

**1 What God ordains is always good;
His will is just and holy.
As he directs my life for me,
I follow meek and lowly.
My God indeed In ev'ry need
Knows well how he will shield me;
To him, then, I will yield me.**

**2 What God ordains is always good;
He never will deceive me.
He leads me in his righteous way
And never will he leave me.
I take content What he has sent;
His hand that sends me sadness
Will turn my tears to gladness.**

**3 What God ordains is always good;
He is my friend and Father.
He will not let me suffer harm
Though many storms may gather.
Now I may know Both joy and woe;
Some day I shall see clearly
That he has loved me dearly.**

**4 What God ordains is always good.
Though I the cup am drinking
Which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.
For after grief God grants relief,
My heart with comfort filling
And all my sorrow stilling.**

**5 What God ordains is always good;
This truth remains unshaken.
Though sorrow, need, or death be mine,
I shall not be forsaken.
I fear no harm, For with his arm
He will embrace and shield me;
So to my God I yield me.**

Announcements

Lenten Series

Baptized into His Death

St. Paul writes, “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3). There is a connection between our baptism and Christ’s passion. Lent is the perfect season to learn anew all that which God’s Word tells us about Baptism. We will see how we were powerfully connected in our baptism to all Christ’s saving work. We will study again what our baptism means for our daily lives. And we will rededicate ourselves to the struggle of living the new life Baptism gives. Join us for our upcoming midweek Lent series: Baptized into His Death

Week 3 of the Lenten Study Challenge:

“I already have my own routine, so what is there for me in the challenge?”

For some of you, bible study may already be part of your day. You have a routine and that’s wonderful! Routine and habit are a goal of this challenge. Growing and stretching yourself is another goal. Perhaps you could try copying one of the verses from your reading that touched you. Put it on a post-it and leave it in your kitchen to re-read throughout the day. Read a book from the church library on a topic you want to know more about. You don’t have to read an entire chapter at a time (unless you want to) but try adding just 5 minutes at the end of your Bible reading time. Or plan a movie night. Maybe invite some friends to watch with you. The Lord will bless your efforts as you grow in your personal study.

Church Cleaners:

March 3 - Barnabas // March 10 - Luke

DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

**Su (25) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship**

Tu (27) 5:00 pm "Test the Spirits" Bible Info. Class
6:00 pm Elders Meeting
7:00 pm Council Meeting

We (28) 10:00 am Ottawa Pastors' Winkel
7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Worship

Th (29) 6:00 pm Illuminé (at St. Paul's)
6:30 pm Youth Confirmation (W)

Fr (1) 3:00 pm Online Women's Bible Study
4:30 pm Youth Confirmation (D)

**Su (3) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship & Communion
3:00 pm Worship in Poltimore**

Tu (5) 5:30 pm "Test the Spirits" Bible Info. Class

We (6) 9:30 am Online Pastors' Circuit Meeting
7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Worship

Th (7) 10:30 am Longfield Manor Devotion
6:00 pm Illuminé (at St. Paul's)
6:30 pm Youth Confirmation (W)

Fr (8) 3:00 pm Online Women's Bible Study

**Su (10) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship**



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