



Daily Prayer
+ Thursday, April 2, 2020 +

Invocation

L: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: and my mouth will declare your praise.

L: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C: make haste to help me, O Lord.

C: Glory be to Father and to the + Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Psalmody

Psalm 69:33-36

L: For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise his own people who are prisoners.

C: Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them.

L: For God will save Zion and build up the cities of Judah, and people shall dwell there and possess it;

C: the offspring of his servants shall inherit it, and those who love his name shall dwell in it.

C: Glory be to Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Hymn

526

[1] You are the way; through You alone
Can we the Father find;
In You, O Christ, has God revealed
His heart and will and mind.

[2] You are the truth; Your Word alone
True wisdom can impart.
You only can inform the mind
And purify the heart.

[3] You are the life; the empty tomb
Proclaims Your conqu'ring arm,
And those who put their trust in You
Not death nor hell shall harm.

[4] You are the way, the truth, the life;
Grant us that way to know,
That truth to keep, that life to win
Whose joys eternal flow.

Reading

Mark 15:16-32

And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. And they crucified him and divided his garments among them,

casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

L: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Devotional Message from Pastor Thompson

Earlier in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus called the crowd to himself and to his disciples and said to them, *"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."* (Mark 8:34-38)

Here Jesus invites the crowds to believe in him, to be his disciples, to take up the cross and to follow him. And many people would take Jesus up on this invitation. Hundreds of people in Israel turned from their sins in repentance and put their faith in Jesus. And among the crowd of disciples, especially the twelve apostles. They literally followed him from town to town as he healed the sick, cast out demons, and preached the Gospel.

Yet, on the night when he was betrayed, in their weakness, the disciples of Jesus all fell away. Even the twelve. Judas betrayed him. Peter denied him. The others fled.

And so, on the road to Golgotha, as the Roman soldiers led Jesus to his death and as they sought someone to help him carry the cross, there were no disciples of Jesus to take up his cross and follow him.

Only a bystander; Simon of Cyrene. Simon was a common name in 1st century Israel. Peter's name was Simon. Cyrene was the capital city of the north African district of Cyrenaica; located on the coast of northeast Libya. There were many Jews in Cyrene and a synagogue for them was located in Jerusalem during the 1st century.

Mark writes that Simon was the "*the father of Alexander and Rufus*". (Mark 15:21) Years later, Rufus was a member of the church in Rome and Paul greeted him in his letter to Rome: "*Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; also his mother, who has been a mother to me as well.*" (Romans 16:13)

Simon of Cyrene did not volunteer for this duty of carrying the cross. Simon was not yet a disciple of Jesus. Mark writes that he was "*compelled*" to carry the cross. Simon was pressed into service and forced to carry the cross.

Why? Because Jesus was all alone. All of his disciples had abandoned him and fled. Judas betrayed him. Peter denied him. Jesus was all alone. And alone he would bear the cross. A bystander is forced to carry his cross because no friend and no disciple can be found to take up the cross and follow him.

On the one hand, this is a tragedy and another wrong inflicted upon Jesus. He is left alone even by his friends. A reminder that we are called to be loyal to Christ; though we often fail him. And so we repent.

On the other hand, this lonely walk to the cross is fitting and appropriate. Jesus alone is the Savior. Jesus alone bears the cross. We all fall short of the glory of God, even the apostles, and not one of us can claim participation in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus at the cross. He is the Savior and he is the Savior all alone.

All alone Jesus is the Christ. He alone bears the cross. May our faith be in him alone now and always. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

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 and ever. Amen.

Collect

L: Almighty and everlasting God, you sent your Son to take upon himself our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross. Grant that we may follow the example of his great humility and patience and be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen.

[1] Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure:
Cleanse me from its guilt and pow'r.

[2] Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

[3] Nothing in my hand I bring;
Simply to Thy cross I cling.
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die!

[4] While I draw this fleeting breath,
When mine eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee!