

MAUNDY THURSDAY

March 28, 2024

7:00 p.m.

SEVEN

Last

Words

FROM THE

CROSS

*“Father, into your hands
I commit my spirit.”*

(Luke 23:46)

MAUNDY THURSDAY

MARCH 28, 2024

7:00 p.m.

PRELUDE

Jesus, Refuge of the Weary

Setting: J. Wayne Kerr

AS WE GATHER

On Thursday of Holy Week the church begins marking the final acts of our Lord's Passion. This is a time of rich grace in which we observe God's salvation being brought to us in Jesus.

Tonight's service begins with an extended time of confession reminding us of our mortality and need for salvation. The absolution which follows closes the Lenten season with a powerful statement of God's forgiveness – given through the pastor as from God himself.

This year's Service of the Word concludes our Lenten midweek focus on the Seven Words of Jesus from the cross. Tonight's word is: "Into your hands I commit my spirit."

Upon hearing the Word of God read and proclaimed, we will celebrate Holy Communion together on this night when the Supper was instituted. Our worship will conclude as the altar is stripped – an action meant to demonstrate the depth of Christ's servanthood as he journeys toward the cross.

CORPORATE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

LSB 290

ENTRANCE HYMN (*Stand*) *Jesus, Refuge of the Weary*

LSB 423

- 1 Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above:
Often have Your eyes, offended,
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;
Yet upon the cross extended,
You have borne the pain of all.**

- 2 Do we pass that cross unheeding,
Breathing no repentant vow,
Though we see You wounded, bleeding,
See Your thorn-encircled brow?
Yet Your sinless death has brought us
Life eternal, peace, and rest;
Only what Your grace has taught us
Calms the sinner's deep distress.
- 3 Jesus, may our hearts be burning
With more fervent love for You;
May our eyes be ever turning
To behold Your cross anew
Till in glory, parted never
From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever,
Dwell the cross, the Crucified.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. O Lord,

C: in this wondrous Sacrament You have left us a remembrance of Your passion. Grant that we may so receive the sacred mystery of Your body and blood that the fruits of Your redemption may continually be manifest in us; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

OLD TESTAMENT READING (Be seated)

Exodus 24:3-11

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the just decrees. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young

men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 31:1-5 (Sung responsively)

In you, O LORD, do I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me!

**Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily!**

**Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me!**

For you are my rock and my fortress;
and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me;
**you take me out of the net they have hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.**

Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.

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

NEW TESTAMENT READING

1 Corinthians 10:14–17

Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

JUBILATION CHOIR

Ah, Jesus Lord, Thy Love to Me

Text Paul Gerhardt Setting: David N. Johnson

Ah, Jesus Lord, thy love to me, no thought can reach, no tongue declare;

O bind my thankful heart to thee, and reign without a rival there. Thine wholly, thine alone, I'd live, myself to thee entirely give.

O grant that nothing in my soul may dwell, but thy pure love alone;

Ah, may thy love possess me whole, my joy, my treasure, and my crown.

All coldness from my heart remove: may ev'ry act, word, thought, be love.

O Lord, how gracious is thy way! All fear before thy presence flies; Care, anguish, sorrow, melt away, where e'er thy healing hands arise.

O Jesus, nothing may I see, and nothing seek, desire, but thee.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 23:44-46

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 23rd chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling

out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And having said this he breathed his last.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON (Be seated)

The Seventh Word: “Father, Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit”

“It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun’s light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!’ And having said this he breathed his last.” Luke 23:44–46

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

During this Lenten season we have reflected upon the words spoken by Jesus as he hung dying on the cross. These were his last seven utterances before death, spoken in his direst hours. Let’s review them briefly...

- On behalf of his oppressors he interceded: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
- To his mother he said: “Woman, behold your son.” And to his disciple: “Behold your mother.”
- To the repentant thief he promised: “Today you will be with me in paradise.”
- To God the Father he lamented, “My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?”
- In anguish he cried: “I thirst!”

- In triumph he declared: “It is finished!”

And finally, in death, he prayed: “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” This is his seventh and final word from the cross and the one upon which we will meditate this evening.

Notice that these words of Jesus are a prayer. And note, too, that this prayer is not original to Jesus but rather comes from Psalm 31 – a portion of which we read earlier in the service. As part of the Hebrew Scriptures, this prayer had been expressed by people for generations. The prayer was a rich part of the Jewish worship life – both in corporate and individual prayer.

However, the prayer was most commonly known in Jesus’ day as a bedtime prayer. It was the prayer that every Jewish mother taught her child to say as the last thing at night.

As we can thus see, Jesus died with a prayer on his lips – a prayer his own mother had likely said to him many times before. The only word which Jesus added to it was “Father” – a fitting address for him and for his followers.

Our bedtime prayers today often reflect similar themes as this verse. For instance, our prayer: “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take” captures the verse’s spirit in many ways. And Martin Luther’s evening prayer is even more similar, for it includes with the line: “Into Thy hands I commend myself—my body and soul and all things.”

The final prayer of Jesus, his last words from the cross, tells us much about his death. One clear message it gives is

that Jesus died like a child falling asleep in his father's arms.

And this is important for us to note. For God would have us face our own death in the same way.

To help move us toward this place, or to reinforce it should we already be there, let's do some further thinking about this great prayer from the scriptures.

As already mentioned, in this prayer Jesus addresses God as Father. Here we see Jesus choosing a form of address that indicates affection and trust.

Jesus regularly spoke of God as his Father. But here the word choice is especially poignant. And that's because moments earlier Jesus had been abandoned by his Father. Remember how he had cried out: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me." His words "I thirst" also reflected his place of abandonment. The Holy God had turned away from the Son while the Son was bearing the very unholy sins of his people.

Eventually, however, the Father's turning away ceased. And that's because the Son's work on the cross had been completed. As Jesus triumphantly declared, the work he had been sent to do there was finished. God's judgment against sin was complete; and humanity's sin was atoned for.

Jesus thus entrusts himself once again to the Father – committing himself in faith for the final vindication of his resurrection. In his final breath, Jesus lays claim to his relationship with God as the only begotten Son of the Father.

And the result is even more blessing for us. For this shows that the Father can now accept us, too, in his presence. We, like Jesus, may now address God as Father. We have been restored to a right relationship with him and have become heirs of salvation —both now and at the hour of our death.

These words of Jesus speak strongly to us as we think about our death. But they should also speak strongly to us as we think about our life.

Psalm 31 is a prayer of trust. Verse three, which we read, says to God: “For you are my rock and my fortress; and for your name’s sake you lead me and guide me.” God’s leading and guiding happen day after day as we go forward in the life he has given us. The winds of change may daily threaten to blow us off God’s path, but they can’t do it when God is our “rock” and our “fortress.”

Later, in the 14th and 15th verse of the psalm, we are led to pray: “But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, ‘You are my God.’ My times are in your hand.” Here we find another acclamation of trust – one that is again given with the thought of being safe in God’s hands.

You’ve probably heard the claim of a certain insurance company say: “You’re in good hands with Allstate.” The slogan suggests that we’ll be protected and cared for in times of catastrophe and calamity.

God’s hands are much better. The Father’s hands are the best of hands—supporting, caring, and protecting in times of both wealth and woe.

These are the hands into which Jesus placed himself. And these are the hands into which we can place ourselves as well. We can entrust ourselves to the Father in all

circumstances knowing that he will always have our best interests in mind.

Whether our problems are broken relationships, poor health, financial hardships, or temptations to sin—we can entrust these to God knowing that he will lead us and guide us with the unwavering strength of a rock.

God's care will extend to the very final moments of our lives. And when those moments come, we can once again place ourselves into his secure and sheltering arms. As the familiar hymn states: "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."

One more thought on this prayer commended by our Lord. When it says: "Into Thy hands I commit my spirit," we should note how this points to our spirit's immediate transfer to the Father at the moment of death.

Physical death, according to Christians, involves a separation. It is a separation of the spirit (or soul) from the body. The physical body is placed in a tomb or a similar resting place, but the spirit has departed.

In the case of Christ, his spirit, too, departed to be with the Father. That's what Jesus was referring to in his prayer.

The prayer thus reinforces the continued life we have with God in the spirit after our death. And it assures us that the spirits of our loved ones who have died in the faith are now at peace and rest with God.

We should also remember, however, that this life with God in the spirit is not our final condition. For as the

scriptures clearly teach, a reuniting of the spirit and body will take place on the day of resurrection.

For Jesus, this reuniting took place on Easter morning when he rose physically from the dead. The resurrected Lord was no ghost or phantom! He was fully and gloriously restored as a

human being with both body and soul. Remember how his disciples touched him and ate with him.

So it is with us. When we die, our spirits go to be with God and our bodies are laid to rest here on earth. Those bodies will decay and disintegrate, becoming dust and ashes. But when Jesus comes again in his glorious reappearing, he will bring with him the spirits of all who have died in the faith. Our bodies will then be raised and gloriously restored and our spirits will be reunited to those bodies, never to be separated again. We will be fully restored as God had always intended us to be—whole and glorified in both body and soul!

What happened to Jesus in his death and resurrection will happen to us. And it will happen to us only because it happened to Jesus first. His death and resurrection have made it possible.

The death of Jesus gives us confidence when we face death. And his resurrection assures us of the future resurrection of our bodies. Praise be to God!

Peter Marshall tells the story of a young child who died with this assurance. Marshall writes: In a home of which I know, a little boy—the only son—was ill with an incurable disease. Month after month the mother had tenderly nursed him, read to him, and played with him, hoping to keep him from realizing the dreadful reality of the doctor's

diagnosis. But as the weeks went on and he grew no better, the little fellow gradually began to understand that he would never be like the other boys he saw playing outside his window. Small as he was, he began to understand the meaning of the term death, and he knew that he was certain to die.

One day . . . [he] asked the question that had been weighing on his childish heart: “Mother, what is it like to die? Mother, does it hurt?”

Quick tears sprang to her eyes . . . and [she] breathed a hurried prayer that the Lord would keep her from breaking down before the boy and tell her how to answer him . . .

Immediately, she knew how to explain it to him.

“Kenneth,” she said . . . “remember when you were a tiny boy how you used to play so hard all day that when night came you would be too tired even to undress, and you would tumble into mother’s bed and fall asleep? That was not your bed . . . and not where you belonged. But you would only stay there a little while. And in the morning, much to your surprise, you would wake up and find yourself in your own bed in your own room. You were there because someone had loved you and taken care of you. Your father had come—with big strong arms—and carried you away.

“Kenneth, death is just like that. We wake up some morning to find ourselves in the other room—our own room where we belong—because the Lord Jesus loved us.”

The lad’s shining, trusting face looked up into hers. And this told her that the point had gotten home and that there would be no more fear . . . only love and trust in his little heart as he went to meet the Father in Heaven. He

never questioned his death again. And several weeks later he fell asleep as she had said.

At the moment of his death, Jesus prayed: "Father into your hands I commit my spirit!" So also, let us learn to say this prayer, both in preparation for our death and in anticipation of each night's rest. For the Lord God is holding us in his powerful and loving hands. And he will sustain and protect us always.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN (Stand) Jesus, In Your Dying Woes Sts. 19-21 LSB 447

19 Seventh Word: Luke 23:46

**Jesus, all Your labor vast,
All Your woe and conflict past,
Yielding up Your soul at last:
Hear us, holy Jesus.**

20 When the death shades round us low'r,

**Guard us from the tempter's pow'r,
Keep us in that trial hour:
Hear us, holy Jesus.**

21 May Your life and death supply

**Grace to live and grace to die,
Grace to reach the home on high:
Hear us, holy Jesus.**

APOSTLES' CREED (Hymnal, back cover)

**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.**

OFFERING

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH (Kneel)

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Gracious Lord, we commit our spirits to you, for by Your righteousness you deliver us from death and the grave. Embolden our hearts to pray with boldness and confidence, knowing that Christ prays with us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, as the institution of Your new testament is celebrated this day throughout the church, make Your saving power known throughout the world. As there is one bread that is broken, form us who are many into one body that we may participate together as partakers of your grace and workers in your kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You have formed us after the pattern of Christ's humble service. Help us in our vocations to follow His example of

self-sacrifice and to truly live according to your commandment of love. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God of hosts, we rally to Your altar in the wilderness of this world. Hear our prayers for all who are suffering, sick, struggling and mourning. Refresh them in their trials, comfort them with Your Word, and nourish them in body and soul. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Host, at Mt. Sinai You welcomed the leaders of Israel to eat and drink with You and did not lay Your hand on them. As You welcome us to Your altar to eat and drink our Lord's Supper, do not lay Your hand on us but count us worthy to receive forgiveness, life and salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gather us, heavenly King, around Your Son's altar with angels and saints, so that at length we come to share this feast in eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend ourselves, our bodies and souls, and all things; redeem us through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE through AGNUS DEI (Stand)

LSB 192-198

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks unto the Lord, our God.

It is meet and right so to do.

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in
the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

AGNUS DEI

**O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.
O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world,
grant us Thy peace. Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)

Those wishing to commune at the foot of the steps should come forward first. Those wishing to commune at the altar rail should come forward after these, front rows first, from both sides of the aisle. After receiving, all should return to their seats. A common dismissal will be given at the end.

COMMUNION HYMN Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed *LSB 437*

- 1 Alas! And did my Savior bleed,
 And did my sov'reign die?
 Would He devote that sacred head
 For such a worm as I?**
- 2 Was it for crimes that I had done
 He groaned upon the tree?
 Amazing pity, grace unknown,
 And love beyond degree!**
- 3 Well might the sun in darkness hide
 And shut his glories in
 When God, the mighty maker, died
 For His own creatures' sin.**
- 4 Thus might I hide my blushing face
 While His dear cross appears,
 Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
 And melt mine eyes to tears.**
- 5 But drops of grief can ne'er repay
 The debt of love I owe;
 Here, Lord, I give myself away:
 'Tis all that I can do.**

PRAYER (Stand)

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR (Be seated) *Were You There*
Setting: Emma Lou Diemer

+ We leave in silence +

THOSE SERVING IN OUR MIDST:

Greeter: Steve Berg
Comm. assist: Dan Buuck
Reader: Dan Buuck
Acolyte: Andreas Buuck



Friday, April 7	Good Friday - Evening Service - 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, April 8	Easter Vigil (HC) - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 9	Easter Sunday (HC) - 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Mandarin Chinese Service 12:15 p.m.

Acknowledgements

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