

SURELY HE
HAS BORNE
OUR GRIEFS
AND CARRIED
OUR SORROWS;
YET WE
ESTEEMED
HIM STRICKEN,
SMITTEN BY
GOD, AND
AFFLICTED.

Isaiah 53:4



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As We Gather

We naturally love beautiful victories—shining trophies, parades, and flawless triumphs. But as we gather this Good Friday, our eyes are drawn to a very different scene. The cross of Christ is brutal, bloody, and offensive to human senses. There is no physical beauty in a bruised and dying Savior. Yet, the prophet Isaiah invites us to look closely at this marred figure. Beneath the staggering horror of the crucifixion lies the most breathtaking triumph the world has ever known. Prepare your hearts to witness the profound mystery of our salvation. The cost of our forgiveness was agonizing, but as we will explore in God's Word today, it is precisely in this "Ugliest Victory" that our beautiful eternity was secured.

✠ Preparation for Worship ✠

Hymn

171 (1, 4-7, 9) – Upon the Cross Extended

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Opening Sentences

1 Cor 1:18; Phil 2:8; Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 15:57

P The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,

C **But to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

P He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death,

C **Even the death of the cross.**

P God forbid that I should boast,

C **Except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

P Thanks be to God,

C **Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Confession and Absolution

P Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather on this most solemn day to witness a paradox. What the eyes of the world judge as an ugly, humiliating defeat—the brutal execution of the Son of God—is in truth the greatest victory ever won. Yet, we must humbly acknowledge that it was our rebellion that necessitated this sacrifice. It was our sin that marred His visage. Let us therefore approach our heavenly Father, confessing the ugliness of our own sin, and seeking His forgiveness for the sake of the One who endured the cross in our place.

C Almighty and ever-living God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. The ugliness of our pride, our selfishness, and our failure to love has separated us from You. We deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows to the cross, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to suffer the ugliest of deaths for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. His victory is your pardon. As a called servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

✠ The Service of the Word ✠

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray...

... who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. ⁷ who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, ⁸ though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. ⁹ And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 22:1-2, 6-8, 14-18, 30-31

- P** My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
C **Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?**
P O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
C **And in the night season, and am not silent.**
P I am a worm, and no man;
C **A reproach of men, and despised by the people.**
P All those who see Me ridicule Me;
C **They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,**
P “He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
C **Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”**
P I am poured out like water, And all My bones are out of joint;
C **My heart is like wax; It has melted within Me.**
P My strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My tongue clings to My jaws;
C **You have brought Me to the dust of death.**
P For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
C **They pierced My hands and My feet;**
P I can count all My bones.
C **They look and stare at Me.**
P They divide My garments among them,
C **And for My clothing they cast lots.**
P A posterity shall serve Him.
C **It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation,**
P They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
C **That He has done this.**

Gospel Reading

John 19:17-30

¹⁷ And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, ¹⁸ where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. ¹⁹ Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS ²⁰ Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. ²¹ Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, “I am the King of the Jews.” ’ ” ²² Pilate answered, “What I have written, I

have written.”²³ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.²⁴ They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore the soldiers did these things.²⁵ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!”²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!”²⁹ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth.³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Response

P Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.

C Amen.

Confession of Faith

Luther’s Explanation of the Second Article

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.

He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

Hymn

172 (1, 4, 7-8) – O Sacred Head, Now Wounded



¹³ Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently; He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high. ¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, So His visage was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men; ¹⁵ So shall He sprinkle many nations. Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; For what had not been told them they shall see, And what they had not heard they shall consider. ¹ Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him. ³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. ⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. ⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. ⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. ¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

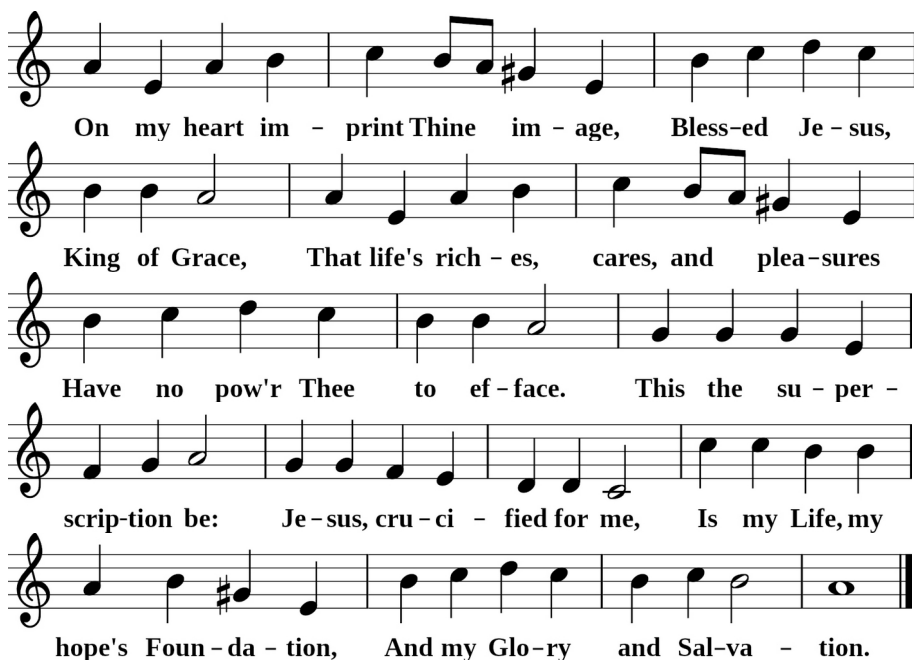


Sermon

The Ugliest Victory

Offertory

TLH 179 – On My Heart Imprint Thine Image



On my heart im - print Thine im - age, Bless-ed Je - sus,
King of Grace, That life's rich - es, cares, and plea-sures
Have no pow'r Thee to ef - face. This the su - per -
scrip-tion be: Je - sus, cru - ci - fied for me, Is my Life, my
hope's Foun - da - tion, And my Glo-ry and Sal - va - tion.

General Prayer

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.

Passion History Reading

VII. The Burial of Our Lord

The whole crowd who came together to witness the crucifixion, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances and many women also were there, standing at a distance, watching these things. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, the mother of Zebedee's sons. And there were many other women who had accompanied Him from Galilee and came with Him to Jerusalem, ministering to Him.

Because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews

asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with Jesus; but when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of His bones shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him whom they pierced."

And after these things, when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that, behold, there came a rich man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. He was a good and just man, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. He was a prominent council member, but he had not consented to their counsel and deed. This man took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus, that he might take it away. And Pilate marveled that He was already dead, and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. And when he found out from the centurion, Pilate gave him permission and commanded the body to be given to Joseph.

Then Joseph bought fine linen and came and took the body of Jesus down. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and wrapped and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden Joseph's own new tomb, that was hewn out of the rock, in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore because that day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near, and because the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after. Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, the mother of Jesus. They observed the tomb, and where and how His body was laid. And Joseph rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and went away. And the women returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise'. Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead'. So the last deception will be worse than the

first.” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
- C** Amen.

Hymn

175 – When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

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✠ Announcements ✠

Upcoming Schedule – winterhavenlutheran.com/church-calendar

April 3	7:00 pm	Good Friday Worship
April 5	9:00 am	Easter Breakfast
	10:15 am	Worship Service w/ Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Quarterly Voters’ Meeting
April 10	10:30 am	Learning with Littles
April 12	8:00 am	Worship Service (Orlando)
	10:15 am	Worship Service (Winter Haven)

Upcoming Meetings: Here is a schedule of our upcoming meetings:

- **April 5** – Quarterly Voters’ Meeting
- **May 3** – Education/Elders
- **June 7** – Trustees/Church Council

In Our Prayers: Please keep our shut-in members in your prayers: Don Beymer, Bob & Joan Doriot, Johanna Jaehnigen, David & Elsie Kleinschmidt, Shirley Rosenberry, and Mike Sheffield.



Looking Forward to Sunday: Have you ever noticed how much time we spend looking down? We stare at the dirt of our daily struggles, the heavy mess of our sins, and ultimately, the dust of the grave. But next Sunday is Easter! The stone is rolled away. Why keep looking down when the tomb is empty? Join us as we celebrate the triumphant bodily resurrection of our Lord. Our sermon, "Stop Staring at the Dirt!", is based on Colossians 3:1-4. Because Jesus lives, the Apostle Paul urges us to "seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God." It is time to lift our eyes from the dust of death to the glory of eternal life! Christ is risen!

ILC Dorm Supervisor: Jaqi Bredehoft will be resigning as girls dorm supervisor at the end of this school year. We thank her for her faithful service to the LORD and for being such a positive role model to our dorm students. ILC is accepting applicants for this position to begin the 2026-27 school year. This role is vital to our campus, given how dorm supervisors provide spiritual counsel and a fatherly or motherly role to those students who are living away from home. Females who are CLC members in good standing and are able and willing to fill this position may contact ILC President Daniel Schierenbeck (dan.schierenbeck@ilc.edu/660.) for more information about the responsibilities and compensation for this position. An application is available online at ilc.edu > Forms and Applications > ILC Employment Application. Review of applications begins April 15.

CLC News: Teacher Levi Schaller of Messiah Lutheran School, Hales Corners, WI, has returned the call to Redeemer Lutheran School, Cheyenne, WY. <> Teacher Ross Kok of Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ, has received the call to teach grades 3-4 and serve as associate principal at Messiah Lutheran School, Eau Claire, WI. <> Teacher Lane Fischer of Immanuel Ev. Lutheran School, Mankato, MN, has returned the call to Faith Lutheran School, Markesan, WI. <> Pastor Michael Wilke of Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Saginaw, MI, has received the call to Messiah Lutheran Church, Eau Claire, WI. <> Pastor David Pfeiffer of Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, West Columbia, SC, has received the call to Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, Madison Heights, MI. <> Pastor Rob Sauers of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Winter Haven, FL, has received the call to Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, Phoenix, AZ. <> Pastor Jonah Albrecht of Redemption Ev. Lutheran Church, Lynnwood, WA, and Ascension Lutheran Church, Tacoma, WA, has received the call to Living Hope Lutheran Church, Appleton, WI. <> Pastor Del Maas of Gift of God Lutheran Church, Mapleton, ND, and St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Ponsford, MN, has retired due to non life-threatening health concerns. His last service was March 29, 2026.

