

Prayer Vigil 2003

“Could you not keep watch with me for one hour?” Jesus asked His disciples.

We are pleased that you have accepted the invitation to pray during these hours. It is our prayer that this time will be a blessing to you and that your daily prayer life will be enhanced by this experience.

Meditation Suggestions for Prayer Vigil

Pray the words of Hymn #109 “Jesus I Will Ponder Now”

Contemplate the cross. Consider that our access to the Father’s throne of grace is through the cross. Be reminded that as sinners we have no claim on God; there is no reason in us that He should turn His ear toward us. Our access is by grace. Our access is through Jesus who intercedes for us.

Part I

Read Mark 8:27-31. What does Jesus say must happen? Why must this happen?

Contemplate the reasons for the cross. Why did Jesus have to die?

1. Jesus had to die to fulfil what the Old Testament prophets had pictured and prophesied. Jesus is the Seed of the woman who would crush Satan (Genesis 3:15). Jesus is the covering for our sin (Genesis 3:21; Romans 4:7). Jesus is the Lamb provided by God for the sacrifice (Genesis 22:8). Jesus is the Passover Lamb whose blood rescues us from the angel of death (Exodus 12:21-23). Jesus is the Lamb of God who carries away the sin of the world (Leviticus 16:20-22; John 1:29; Psalm 103:8-12). Jesus is the serpent lifted up (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14).

Pray in praise and thanks to God for His prophets and His word of promise to all generations. Pray the words of Hymn #337 “Preserve Your Word, O Saviour”.

2. Jesus had to die to satisfy the requirements of God’s justice and law. “The wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23). “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin” (Hebrews 9:22). Read Romans 3:9-20 and ponder the pervasiveness and depth of sin. We could never be righteous in God’s sight by our

own keeping of His commandments. But things are not hopeless. Romans 3:21 says “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law has been made known to us”. Where does it come from? It comes through faith in Christ Jesus. Read on in Romans 3:22-26. Jesus is our sacrifice of atonement and our righteousness.

Contemplate these Scriptures: Hebrews 2:14; Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 1:18,19. Jesus had to die because there was no other way for us to be saved (Acts 4:12)

Pray in praise and thanks to God for His gift of a Saviour who takes our sin upon Himself and gives us His own perfectness in exchange. Pray the words of Hymn #362 “Jesus, Your blood and Righteousness.”

Part II

Contemplate the cross itself. Read Matthew 27:15-26. Whose cross was it? How are we like Him? Jesus literally takes his place and trades His innocence that the guilty might go free. This is the great exchange.

Contemplate the cross itself. Why did Jesus stumble under its load? Was He carrying more than wood? Read Isaiah 53: 4-6 for an answer.

Pray in praise and thanks to God that Jesus has carried the burden and punishment of our sin and the sin of the whole world. Use the words of Hymn #116 “Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted” as a guide.

Part III

Contemplate what is to come. When did death start and why? (Romans 5:12-14, Genesis 2:15-17) How important is the resurrection of Jesus Christ? Read 1Corinthians 15:12-19.

It has been said that the resurrection is either the most fantastic fact of history or it is one of the most wicked, vicious and heartless hoaxes ever put upon the minds of men. Back in the 1960’s a young English lawyer, Frank Morrison, an unbeliever, decided it was time to write a book. From a legal and historical point of view he set out to disprove the resurrection. The end product was a book called “Who Moved the Stone” (1967)

What does the physical evidence tell us?

- a. Was Jesus really dead? John 19:31-34, Mark 15:42-45
- b. Was He buried in that grave? Matthew 27:59-61
- c. Did the disciples steal the body? John 20:19,26, Luke 24:2
- d. Did someone else steal the body? Matthew 27:62-66, Matthew 28:11,14, John 20:6-8
- e. Did Jesus' followers make up the whole thing? Luke 24:11, Luke 24:13-24

What can we conclude:

- a. Jesus was _____
- b. He was buried _____
- c. No one stole _____
- d. On resurrection morning the grave _____
- e. Therefore _____

Sherlock Holmes would often say that if you eliminate the probable, whatever is left, however improbable, must be the truth. Frank Morrison was led to the conclusion that Jesus rose from the dead. He became a Christian.

Not everyone who knew Jesus rose from the dead became a Christian. The soldiers, the Pharisees, all knew the facts, but would not believe. Later Thomas would not believe until he got to see and touch. It is to him that Jesus says "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed". Who is it that has brought you to faith and enabled you to believe? For a hint read Matthew 16:17.

Pray and praise God for the gift of faith. Praise Him for the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart as He has planted faith and made it grow. Praise Him for all those people He has used in your life to bring His Word and Spirit to you – parents, sponsors, Sunday School teachers, pastors, spouse, friends, maybe even strangers. Pray for them. Pray the words of Hymn #166 "Holy Spirit, Light Divine".

Part IV

When the Lord Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer, He gave us a mission prayer. It is not just about me and my needs, it is always "us" and "our." We are called and privileged to pray for others. When we pray "Thy kingdom come," we are praying for missions and the growth of the Kingdom of Grace on earth and the Kingdom of Glory in heaven. Pray then, for God's mission.

Pray for our missionaries and pastors in Canada and throughout the world, for Rev. Ralph Mayan and Rev. Al Maleske, our Synod and District Presidents.

- That God will protect them spiritually.
- That they be empowered by the Holy Spirit as preachers and teachers.
- That they will know God's will and have the courage to pursue it.
- That they will make time for their personal devotional life.
- That they will have the strength to resist temptation, especially the temptation to grow weary.
- That they may have Gospel hearts.

Pray for our Sister Congregations:

- That God would keep them faithful to the Word.
- That God would grant an increase of zeal for His kingdom.
- That God would give them faithful pastors.
- That God would guide their mission and ministry.

Pray for our Schools and Seminaries

- That those who teach and those who learn might grow in faith and in service.
- That hearts and homes and families might be encouraged by their ministry.
- That they might produce an abundant harvest of workers for the Kingdom.

Pray for God's Church in this place

- That those who lead might do so in the power of His Spirit.
- That those who serve in countless ways be blessed to be a continued blessing.
- That He would guide us according to His will.
- That He would give us grace to use His gifts in His service.
- That He would bless our Sunday School, its children and teachers.
- That He would bless our 40th Anniversary celebrations and enable us to "Tell a New Generation"
- That our Nursery School might continue to reflect the love of Jesus to children and their families.
- That our implementation of our Mission Plan for a Lutheran School might be powered by the Word of the Gospel and guided by His Spirit.
- That those who are sick might know God's healing.
- That those who are lonely or depressed might know God's peace.
- That those who grieve and mourn might be comforted.
- That those who have wandered and strayed might return.

- That the Lord would awaken us to the needs of those around us and that we might be channels of His grace to those who are hurting.
- That the Lord give us thankful hearts for all the blessings He has given to His church.

Pray for our Pastor and his family

- That they be blessed to be a blessing to God's flock and God's kingdom.
- That Pastor Flohr be guided by God's Word and God's will.
- That Pastor Flohr be bold to preach and gifted to teach.
- That God keep at bay temptation and the power of the devil.
- That God give the right words to speak and prepare hearts to hear.

Pray the word of hymn # 316, "Send Now, O Lord, to Every Place." This time of Easter reminds us that the greatest reason to pray is the empty tomb. St. Paul tells us in Romans 8:34 – "Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us."

Mighty Victim from the sky, Hell's fierce pow'rs beneath you lie;
You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light. Alleluia!

Now no more can death appall, Now no more the grace enthrall;
You have opened paradise, And your saints in you shall rise. Alleluia!

Easter triumph, Easter joy! This alone can sin destroy;
From sin's pow'r, Lord, set us free, Newborn souls in you to be. Alleluia!

Father, who the crown shall give, Saviour, by whose death we live,
Spirit, guide through all our days: Three in One, your name we praise. Alleluia!