

Prayer Vigil 2010

As we gather to meditate during this hour, it is our prayer you would be blessed, and through God's Word and Spirit be strengthened in faith and hope.

For our meditation during this blessed hour, you would be reflecting on God's mercy upon us as he gave His Only Begotten Son to die for us. Our meditation is focused on the special words of the Hymn #434:

*Lamb of God, Pure and Holy, Who on the cross didst suffer,
Ever patient and lowly, Thyself to scorn didst offer,
All sins Thou borest for us, Else had despair reigned o'er us:
Have mercy on us, O Jesus! O Jesus!*

1. Meditate on The Pure and Holy Lamb of God

(1Peter 1:18-19): You were ransomed ...with the precious blood of Christ, like a lamb without blemish or spot.

These verses present Christ, as the all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the world, who purifies His people from sin. He is the ransom necessary to buy this world back from futile rebellion against God and to make us holy to the Lord.

According to the Bible, purity and holiness are not equivalent.

Read Leviticus 10:10-11. What is the opposite of Holy? What words are synonymous with Pure / Impure? What tasks did the Lord give to Aaron? How has Christ fulfilled this scripture reading?

The categories God gave to Aaron were *holy* versus *common* and *clean* versus *unclean* (or *pure* versus *impure*). Holiness is impossible to define because it is essential to who God is; perhaps "Godness" or "Godliness" captures it best. The opposite of *holy* is *common*, that is, something that has not been made holy by God. Pure/impure (or clean/unclean) were ritual terms under the old covenant. They addressed what individuals or things could come into the presence of God's holiness. An impure/ unclean person or object would be harmed or destroyed in the presence of God's holiness; a pure/clean person or object would be granted participation in God's holiness. Aaron was given the priestly responsibility of distinguishing between pure and impure, and holy and common at the tabernacle where God was present to judge and to bestow holiness. Christ has fulfilled this passage by being the pure and holy Lamb of God who not only purifies His people but also makes them holy through His Word, His means of grace, so that we may be in God's gracious presence eternally.

What do Exodus 12: 5-6 and 1 Peter 1:19 have as a common relationship? Considering Hebrews 4:15 and 9:14, what is the difference between the flawlessness of the lamb that was sacrificed for the first Passover and that of Christ? According to 1 Corinthians 5:7, how does Christ fulfill Exodus 12: 5-6.?

The background for this verse is the story of the Passover (**Exodus 12**). The Passover lamb had to be "without blemish" (**Exodus 12.5**), that is, it could have no visible flaws. Sacrificial victims had to be flawless or they were unacceptable to God (**Leviticus 22:19-21; Deuteronomy 17:1**). Christ was the ultimate Passover lamb, not only 'without blemish' (**Hebrews 9:14**) physically but also without moral flaws. Jesus is the true man, like us in every way but "without sin" (**Hebrews 4:15**). In **1Corinthians 5:7** Paul identifies Jesus as our Passover Lamb. This recalls the Passover story, in which the blood of the Passover Lamb was placed upon the lintel and doorposts of the houses of the children of Israel so that the angel of death would not strike down their first-born. True to His Promise, God saved Israel and delivered her out of slavery in Egypt. Then He led His chosen people into the Promised Land because through His Blood we are saved from God's wrath against sin. We are delivered from slavery to sin and the devil, and we are led into the promised land of heaven.

Read Isaiah 53: 6-7, 9...a revelation about our impurity as well as the nature of Christ' purity. What does the Lord do with our impurity?

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (**Isaiah 53:6**). The impurity of humanity is comprehensive: **all sheep, every one**. We are "sinful and unclean" as we confess in the **Divine Service**. Yet the Lamb of God had no impurity: "He had done no violence and there was no deceit in

His mouth” (Isaiah 53:9). For our salvation “the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6) and ransomed us wayward sheep from sin, death, and hell. Jesus takes our impurity away and gives us His Purity.

Christ is the pure Lamb of God who purifies us. How does He accomplish this? Read Titus 2:14; John 15:3; and 1 John: 5: 7-9.

When Paul says Christ “gave Himself for us” (Titus 2:14), this is sacrificial language. In this sense, one dies on behalf of another. The result of Christ’s death is redemption and purification from sin so that we are free to serve Him through good works. He makes us clean by speaking His forgiving Word to us (John 15:3). The familiar words of 1 John 5:7-9 remind us that when we hear Absolution from the Pastor “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses (purifies) us from all sin.” Because of Christ’ gracious forgiveness, confessing sin is not a burden but a joyful opportunity to receive purification and renewal of life.

According to Ephesians 5:25-27 and 1 Corinthians 6:11, what is the source of our purification (cleansing from sin) and sanctification (being made holy)?

The source of both forgiveness and sanctification is Christ’s sacrificial death (Ephesians 5:25), yet the way we receive these gifts is through “the washing of water with the word”(Ephesians 5: 26), that is, Holy Baptism. This gift has made the Church spotless and holy. Each one of us is cleansed, sanctified, and justified when we are baptized into the triune name of God (1Corinthians 6:11; see also Matthew 28:19).

Peter writes that we were ransomed (that is, redeemed or brought back) with the “precious blood of Christ” (1:19). Note that the word ‘precious’ has the sense of “very costly” in this passage because the comparison is with silver and gold. In addition, we are told that Christ’s blood is imperishable, whereas gold and silver are perishable. **What connections can you find between this passage and Matthew 20:28; 26:27-28?**

Jesus poured out His lifeblood to ransom us from sin, death, and hell (Matthew 20:28). Actually the ‘many’ He ransomed includes all people (see 2 Corinthians 5:15). Since we have been baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection, we can be confident that we possess the fruits of His redemption. When we drink His true “blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28) in the Lord’s Supper, we are again forgiven and receive a pledge that we are ransomed by His blood. Martin Luther based part of his magnificent explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed on 1 Peter 1:18-19. Each Christian can confess that Christ “has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His Kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity.”

2. We Now Look At The Crucified Lamb Of God As Part Of Our Meditation: Lamb Of God...Who On The Cross Didst Suffer” (LSB #434).

“We preach Christ crucified” (1 Corinthians 1:23)

“Far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world, wrote St. Paul in Galatians 6:14. Martin Luther once said, “The cross alone is our theology!” And according to 1 Corinthians 1:21-25, we find eternal wisdom in the foolishness of God.

Where did the human quest for wisdom go wrong? See Genesis 3:1-7. After reading this, answer this question: What has been the result of this wrong turn?

God created Adam and Eve with the level of insight and understanding. He saw fit and was “very good” (Genesis 1:31), which means perfect. This wasn’t enough for Eve, who fell for the crafty serpent’s tempting offer to “be like God,” an offer Satan couldn’t really fulfill. Eve desired wisdom as only God could have and saw “that the tree was to be desired to make one wise” (3:6). Adam wanted some of this “fruit” too. The human quest for wisdom went wrong in the sin of the creature desiring to be the Creator. The result of this quest has been sin, misery, and death for the children of Adam and Eve. Even now we foolishly desire to

“be like God” by trying to know all things, feel all things, conquer all things, and place ourselves as the centre of the universe. Yet all our “wise” attempts end in death.

Because we cannot know God through human wisdom and because all human attempts to be wise ultimately end in death, where can we find true wisdom? See Timothy 3:14-17. For preaching and teaching in the Church to reflect God’s wisdom, what must be the source of such preaching and teaching?

The Holy Scriptures, God’s inspired and inerrant Word, “are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (**2 Timothy 3:15**). All Christians must continue to be taught, reprov’d, corrected, and trained in righteousness through the Scriptures—whether in personal Bible study, group Bible studies, or in preaching. The source of our knowledge of God has to be the Bible, otherwise our wisdom is man-made and not from God.

Paul wrote, “The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart’” (1 Corinthians 1:18-19). Then Paul said it pleased God to save believers through this foolish preaching (1 Corinthians 1:21). Why did God choose to save persons this way? See Luke 10:21 and 1 Corinthians 1:29.

Humans always seek wisdom that they may “be like God” (**Genesis 3:5**). We want to be big shots on our own, not little children of the heavenly Father. Yet unless we become like children we shall not enter the kingdom of God (**see Luke 18:17**). It is not to the wise but to little children (figuratively speaking) that salvation is revealed (**Luke 10:21**). Why? “It pleased God” (**1 Corinthians 1:21**) or, as Jesus put it, “Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will” (**Luke 10:21**). Further, God wipes out any claims we might have for being big shots when He saves us by grace “so that no human being might boast in the presence of God” (**1 Corinthians 1:29**).

Paul exclaimed, “We preach Christ crucified!” (1 Corinthians 1:23). All Christian preachers should follow suit. Yet even apart from the sermon, what parts of the Divine Service hold the crucified Lamb of God before our eyes?

One of the wonderful virtues of the historic Christian liturgy is that it proclaims Christ crucified. (This answer follows Divine Service Setting 1 in LSB.) After confessing our sins, absolution is granted because “God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you.” The Gloria in Excelsis sings to Christ, “Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world.” The canticle “this is the Feast” sings of “Christ, the Lamb who was slain.” Both the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds recount Christ’s suffering and death. The Words of Institution for the Lord’s Supper proclaim Christ’s death, about which St. Paul states: “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” (**1 Corinthians 11:26**). As we prepare to receive the true body and blood of Jesus under the bread and wine, given for us Christians to eat and drink, we sing in the Agnus Dei, “Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.”

3. Meditate on The Patient Lamb of God.

“Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.” (**1 Peter 3:18**)

LSB #434: “Lamb of God...ever patient”. Patience is suffering pain or temptation without complaining. The English word patient comes from the Greek ‘pathos’ or the Latin ‘passio’, both words that mean ‘suffering.’ The original sense of the word patient is “being acted upon by something else.” Patients of a surgeon are totally inactive, only passive; they are operated upon. Likewise the patient Lamb of God suffered for us as an example, as well as for the most important reason, for our salvation, as we learn in **1 Peter 2:21-24**.

1 Peter 2:22 is a citation from Isaiah 53:9. What is Isaiah 53 about? What should Peter’s use of that verse encourage us to do as we read the Old Testament? See Luke 24:26-27; 44-45.

Isaiah 53 describes the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus! By making direct reference to **Isaiah 53:9**, Peter intends for us to read this section of his letter- indeed, his entire letter- while keeping in mind that Jesus is the fulfillment of the whole chapter of Isaiah 53. Peter’s use of the Old Testament in this way should

encourage us to look for Jesus when we read the Old Testament, as Christ Himself encourages us to do in Luke 24.

Compare 1Peter 2:23 and Isaiah53:7 with Luke 23:34-39, 46. How does the Gospel narrative reinforce St. Peter's assertions about Jesus' patient suffering?

1Peter 2:23 says Jesus bore suffering and insults without retaliation. This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that the Messiah would not open His mouth even when afflicted and oppressed (Isaiah 53:7). The Gospel accounts of Jesus' Passion support both Isaiah's and Peter's assertions. Rather than respond or retaliate, Jesus prayed for His Father to forgive His oppressors (Luke 23:34). Jesus showed His unswerving trust in His Father as He cried out, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46), knowing that God would judge Him righteous and raise Him from the dead.

According to 2 Peter 3:9, how is Christ patient toward sinners? Knowing of this patience, what temptation exists for our sinful flesh? See Romans 2:4.

The Lord is patient with sinners and does not want any to die eternally (2 Peter 3:9). He desires that all would repent and receive His salvation freely offered through the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacrament. Our sinful flesh is tempted to take advantage of the Lord's patience. Sinners would rather continue in sin than repent. May the Lord send His Holy Spirit to protect us from presuming on the riches of His patience. Instead, may the kindness He has shown us in Christ lead us to repentance! (Romans 2:4).

Why are Christians to do good, suffer, and endure? See 1 Peter 2:21 and Luke 9:23.

We are to do good, suffer, and endure patiently because God has called us to this and has given us an example in His Son. Note that we have not called ourselves to this, but God does the calling and works in our lives to bring this about. We are drawn into this calling through Baptism, and we are led to follow Jesus on the way to the cross (Luke 9:23).

Can you see within our Culture, examples of attitudes toward patience and suffering? According to Galatians 5:22-23, where does Christian patience come from?

Our culture shows little interest in patience. Few want to wait until marriage for sex; few want to save money for purchases, opting for credit; few want to work toward reconciliation and opt for divorce.

Many think euthanasia is better than patiently waiting for God to decide when each person will die. Yet the example of Christ shows Christians are to suffer patiently whatever befalls them. Paul calls patience a "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22), that is, a virtue brought through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives through Word and Sacrament.

According to 1 Thessalonians 5:14, Christians are called to be patient with whom? Does being patient mean that we never rebuke sin or criticize laziness? Why or Why not?

Although God is patient with sinners, He constantly rebukes their sins and calls for repentance. Likewise, our patience with others is not moral permissiveness. Rather, we are to "admonish the idle" (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and rebuke all sorts of sins. Perhaps we are too reluctant to admonish today for fear of offending, but we have an obligation as Christians to rebuke sin so that our brothers and sisters in Christ might not fall away through persistent unrepentance.

4. Meditate on The Lowly Lamb of God.

"Jesus humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Philippians 2:8)

LSB #434: "Lamb of God...ever...lowly." Who wants a lowly God? Shouldn't God be big and powerful and impressive? The sinful world thinks so, but the Lord confounds human expectations by appearing in humility: born in a barn, with no place to lay His head, shamefully nailed to the tree. He is God so He has no need to prove Himself. His suffering love draws us away from our prideful self-worship to praise the lowly Lamb of God held before our eyes in **Philippians 2:5-11**.

According to 2 Corinthians 8:9, Jesus “make Himself nothing” (Philippians 2:7). He “took the form of a servant,” according to Mark 10:45. Does the fact that Jesus was “born in the likeness of men” mean that He was like us but was not fully human? Why or why not? See Hebrews 2:16-17.

Although according to His divine nature Christ Jesus is equal to God the Father, possessing all the riches of the divine majesty, He “made Himself nothing” for our sake, becoming poor so that we might become rich with forgiveness of sins and eternal life (2 Corinthians 8:9). God the Son, who created us, laid aside everything He had and became our servant to redeem us, giving His life as a ransom for sins of all people (Mark 10:45). The clause “being made in human likeness” is more literally “being born in the likeness to men.” Christ’s birth was like ours, and He is fully human. He came to save us “offspring of Abraham” by taking our flesh and dying “to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:16-17).

How deep did Christ’s humiliation go? Compare Philippians 2:8, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, and Galatians 3:13-14.

Crucifixion was horrific to Israelites. It was the most shameful manner of death, indicating that the one executed is “cursed by God” (Deuteronomy 21:23). Paul shows how Christ redeemed us from slavish obedience to “the Law by becoming a curse for us” (Galatians 3:13). This is one of the clearest references to the fact that Jesus took God’s just curse upon our sin so that we might be blessed with “the promised Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:14). Christ’s total humiliation results in our exaltation to the status of children of God.

Compare Philippians 2:8-9 with Matthew 5:3-5. How does Jesus live out the Beatitudes?

One who is poor in spirit stands before God as a beggar, expecting no rewards and asking only for mercy. After Jesus became poor in spirit on the cross, God the Father exalted Him and granted Him the kingdom of heaven. Although Jesus anguished over His death on the cross, His Father comforted Him in the resurrection. The meek and lowly Jesus suffered patiently on the cross without resentment, and His Father granted Him authority over all of heaven and earth (see Matthew 28:18). Because of the grace of Christ, we are truly “blessed”.

According to Philippians 2:8, who humbled Jesus? According to John 10:17-18 and John 15:13, what moved the lowly Lamb of God to bear humiliation of the cross?

Jesus humbled Himself! He had the authority to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:17). The Father loved the world and so sent His only Son (John 3:16). The Son loves the Father and so desires to do the Father’s will. The Son shows the greatest love possible by laying down His life for His friends (John 15:13).

Philippians 2:5-11 shows that Christ suffered and died before being exalted. How does our life follow the pattern of His life? See Luke 9:23-24.

In these verses we find a well-known teaching of Jesus that His followers are to “take up their crosses.” We know that the cross is an instrument of pain and death, so these verses are a reminder that, as Paul and Barnabas taught in Acts 14:22, “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” This does not mean that bearing the cross is a good work that merits salvation. Rather, the Christian receives hardship, frustration, pain, and persecution in this life--all things that challenge our faith. “Bearing the cross” means that amid these sufferings Christians continue to believe in Christ’s forgiveness and mercy and do not conclude that God has forsaken them. Just as Christ’s life involved suffering before glory, so will ours. In the kingdom of Jesus, *suffering comes before glory, humility before exaltation.*

5. Meditate on The Lamb of God Who Bears Our Sins Away.

“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

LSB #434: Lamb of God...All sins thou borest for us, else had despair reigned o’er us”.

The modern era, born of the Enlightenment, was characterized by optimism that through the scientific study of all aspects of life we could discover how to eradicate evil and restore this world to Edenic glory. The wars of the 20th century made it the bloodiest ever, proving that science could cause as much harm as good. The optimism of the modern era morphed into despair in the postmodern age. Sentimental appeals to “hope for the future” now fall on deaf ears as people daily view enormous evil and suffering in the media. Our

common enemy, Death, likewise invites us to despair. Yet in the darkness a thrilling voice announces the Lamb who brings hope. Let us find Him in [Genesis 22:7-8, 13-14](#), and [John 1:29](#).

How could a good and loving God ask Abraham to kill his own Son? In [Genesis 22:1-2](#), why did God ask Abraham to do this? Who intervened in [Genesis 22:11-12](#)? From whom did Abraham receive the strength to trust God's command? See [Hebrews 11:17-19](#).

We often ask questions that begin "How could God..." or "Why didn't God..." Ultimately, we are not entitled to answers to such questions; we must trust what God tells us in His Word. The question "How could a good and loving God ask Abraham to kill his own son?" is not a question the Bible answers. However, we are told that God commanded Abraham to do this as a test ([Genesis 22:1](#)).

See [John 3:16](#) and [Romans 5:8-9](#), as these verses reveal in comparison and contrast the role of Isaac with the role of Jesus throughout His life, death, and resurrection.

Both Isaac and Jesus were only sons and were offered up for sacrifice. In the case of Isaac, God stopped the sacrifice and provided a substitute. Yet, God, out of love for the world, did the unthinkable. The heavenly Father went through with the sacrifice of His only –begotten Son, something He did not finally require of Abraham. Isaac's death could not have redeemed sinners, but Jesus' death did. The wrath of God against sin was expended on Jesus. And by the death of Jesus Christ our Lord, who died for us, we are justified ([Romans 5: 8-9](#)).

What does it mean that Jesus "bore" our sins and that He "takes away the sin of the world"? Are the 'bearing' and 'taking away' of our sins past, present, or future events? Read [Matthew 3: 13-15](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#), and [1 John 3:5](#)

The Greek verb translated as "takes away" in [John 1:29](#) has two main senses. First, it means "to take up and carry along, or bear." Second, it means "to carry off, take away." Both senses appropriately describe what the Lamb of God did. As He stood in the Jordan River, Jesus underwent Baptism "to fulfill all righteousness" ([Matthew 3:15](#)), that is, to achieve righteousness for all sinners. In His Baptism, Jesus took all the sins of the world into His flesh and bore them throughout His ministry. Then He took them away by going to the cross ([1 Peter 2:24](#)). This was the reason He came ([1 John 3:5](#)) and still comes to us. The forgiveness of sins is past, present, and future. Christ paid for our sins on the cross; He counts us not guilty of our sins even now on account of Baptism, in which the Holy Spirit "works forgiveness of sins" (Small Catechism); and He will forgive our sins through Absolution and the Lord's Supper as often as we need and desire it. In this way Christ continues to take our sins upon Himself and bear them away.

Read [Luke 22:7, 13-20](#). What significant connections with the Passover lamb are made? What replaces the Passover and the Passover lamb of sacrifice?

The Day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed ([Luke 22:7](#)), was a significant day in the life of the Jews. The Passover meal began on the 14th day of Nisan (also known as Abib), the 1st month of the Jewish religious year. There was no more significant event in the history of Israel, or in the Jewish religious year, than the Passover. In [Luke 22](#) we can see a remarkable parallel between Jesus' Passion and the Passover. The lambs would have been slain on Maundy Thursday evening, the same night Jesus instituted the Supper of His body and blood and the same day (according to Jewish time) on which He would be slaughtered for our salvation. The Lord's Supper replaces the Passover meal and Christ Himself is the Passover Lamb we eat. Here He continues to provide the forgiveness, life, and salvation He won for us on the cross.

6. Meditate on The Lamb of God Who Suffered Scorn

"I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people."

LSB #434: "Lamb of God...Thyself to scorn didst offer." God should not have to endure scorn. In fact, He should punish rebellious mankind who scorns His will with constant attempts to "be like God." Yet the precious Lamb of God offered Himself on the scornful cross so that sinners would not have to face the eternal scorn of hell. As we experience Good Friday, we turn our eyes to the cross, where we see the "worm" of [Psalm 22:6-8](#) hung for our sins.

"Alas! And did my Saviour bleed, and did my sov'reign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" (LSB 437:1). What does this hymn text confess about the reason Jesus became "a

worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people” (Psalm 22:6)? Read Romans 7: 18 and 1 Timothy 1:15. Are Hymns such as this popular in church music today?

Jesus became a scorned worm on the cross because we are vile, sinful worms. The message of this hymn echoes what God’s Word teaches about our evil sinful flesh (Romans 7:18). Yet St. Paul could confess in the same sentence that he was the foremost of sinners and that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15). Jesus devoted His sacred head to a bloody death for us worms to give us eternal life. Such hymns are not popular today because they portray us sinners in negative terms. The truth hurts! The danger is that the less we realize how rotten we are, and the less we appreciate the great suffering and sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Read Psalm 22. How does David’s life foreshadow the life of Jesus Christ? What does this Psalm remind us about the Old Testament in general?

Psalm 22 is the most frequently quoted psalm in the New Testament. It is full of literal descriptions of the person and work of Jesus Christ though it was written about 1000 years before His incarnation! In his suffering, David serves as a type, or foreshadowing, of Christ. God afflicted David with trials to point forward to the afflictions of His Son. Likewise, God made David king of Israel and exalted him to foreshadow the exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth as the King of kings and Lord of lords. When Jesus quoted Psalm 22, or when New Testament writers cited it, they showed that the heart of the Old Testament is Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. Jesus said the Old Testament Scriptures “bear witness about Me” (John 5:39). Therefore we study the Old Testament, as well as the New, to find Jesus Christ our Saviour and to learn His will for the Church.

How does Matthew 27:39-44 fulfill Psalm 22:7?

Psalm 22:7 reflects the scorn heaped on David by everyone around him despite the fact that he was God’s chosen king. This passage finds fulfillment in Matthew 27:39-44. The main taunts hurled at Jesus were that He had done powerful works to save others during His Ministry and had claimed to be the Son of God, but now He was enduring the most shameful death possible. He did not appear to be King of the Jews, though He is, just as David had been.

In what ways are scorn, insults, and mocking heaped upon Jesus Christ even today? Read John 15:18-20 and Luke 10:16.

First, Jesus Christ is mocked when His Word is rejected and subjected to scorn and ridicule. Countless examples of this could be given. Second, when Christian congregations or individuals are persecuted for their faith, Christ Himself is being persecuted, as we see in Luke 10:16. John 15:18-20 says such rejection should not surprise us.

The Gradual used throughout Lent, based on Hebrews 12:2, invites us to “Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Christ endured the scorn of the cross for the joy of saving us. This is the glory of this most Holy Week. Although the world may laugh with scorn on our worship of this scorned Lamb, we find in Him eternal joy that overwhelms any scorn we may face in this life.

7. Meditate on The Lamb of God Who Gives Us Peace.

“Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, he showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” (John 20:19-20)

In the Garden of Eden was the last place perfect peace existed in this world. Sin permeated creation with discord and a strife among men. Worse still, man became God’s enemy. On the first Easter a cease-fire was declared. Our prayer “Thy peace be with us, O Jesus!” (LSB #434, stanza 3) is answered in John 20:19-23.

Jesus’ first words to His disciples after His resurrection were, “Peace be with you”. Considering the disciples’ behavior during the previous days, why is it surprising that Jesus’ greeting was one of peace?

The disciples had failed Jesus miserably after the Last Supper. They all had promised to stick by Jesus even if it meant dying (**Matthew 26:35**). Then they chickened out. Despite His many predictions of rising again, the disciples refused to believe the report of the women that Jesus had risen from the dead (**Luke 24:11**). They were shocked and frightened when He appeared to them (**Luke 24:37-38**). Jesus could have rebuked them for all of their faithlessness. Instead, Jesus said, “Peace be with you.” These were words of forgiveness and love.

When Christ died and rose, what change occurred in the relationship between God and mankind? See **Colossians 1:19-20 and **Ephesians 2:13-18**.**

Sin is hostility toward God that provokes His wrath and condemnation. In Christ God reconciled all things in heaven and earth to Himself, ‘making peace by the blood of His cross’ (**Colossians 1:19-20**). This reconciliation means that God’s wrath toward sin has been appeased. Because He has abolished “the law of commandments and ordinances” (**Ephesians 2:15**), they no longer accuse us, thus showing that the hostility between God and mankind has ended. This declaration of peace in Christ is for all people, but the only way to receive this peace is *in Christ*, that is, through Baptism into the name of the Trinity and faith in Him. This is what **Ephesians 2:18** means: ‘Through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.’

Popular religion often encourages us to seek peace within ourselves. In light of **Jeremiah 17:9, why is this terrible advice? How does Christ ensure that we always can find peace from outside ourselves even as we are full of turmoil on the inside?**

Jeremiah 19:9 says that “the heart is deceitful above all things.” When we look into our hearts, we see sin and death and can find no peace. On the other hand, our hearts can deceive us into thinking that our sins are not very serious, thus we have no need of the peace of Christ’s forgiveness. Jesus provides us with His Word, Baptism, Absolution, and the Lord’s Supper so that we do not have to focus on what is inside of us—our sinful hearts—but on the Lord’s heart as it is revealed in the forgiveness of sins. We are not to look inside of ourselves for peace but outside---to the means of grace.

We need the peace of Christ in our lives, and the weekly Divine service delivers it. After the Words of Institution are spoken and Christ’s body and blood are present on the altar, the pastor says, “THE PEACE OF THE LORD BE WITH YOU ALWAYS.” Our peace comes from the altar. We receive peace with God in Christ’s body and blood given into our mouths for the forgiveness of our sins. After the reception of the Sacrament, we are invited to “DEPART IN PEACE.” Then in the Nunc Dimittis we acknowledge that we have received peace, singing, “ Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace.” Today the resurrected Christ has answered our Lenten prayer: “Thy peace be with us, O Jesus!”