

MINISTRY BY MAIL
Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship
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Quinquagesima, February 15, 2026

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)

Hymns: 324:1-4, 141:1-2, 245, 409, 142:1.

Lessons: Psalm 130, Acts 2:22-32, Luke 18:31-34.

Sermon Text: Mark 10: 32-34.

Adapted by Pastor Robert Mehltritt

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

As we approach the season of Lent we begin to think especially about Jesus' suffering and death.

In our sermon text, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem the final time, to complete his work. He and his heavenly Father have been planning this trip from eternity.

This will accomplish His goals of redeeming you from eternal damnation.

We've all made plans to travel somewhere. Once we choose a destination, then we must decide how we are going to get there. If we are going to fly somewhere, we must purchase tickets, pack what we need to take along, and then get to the airport to catch our flight. We begin our trips on a note of optimism and hope, expecting the best. No one plans to travel to a place where he expects pain, suffering, or even death. If we expect such difficulties either along the way or at our final destination, we don't go. We would cancel the trip even if it was a very important trip. When Jesus began his final journey to Jerusalem, he knew what would happen. Instead of canceling this final trip, Jesus and his disciples joined other Jews on the road to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Today let's walk with him on the road to Jerusalem and see how

JESUS WAS RESOLVED TO DIE

- 1. Jesus went to Jerusalem willing and knowingly.**
- 2. Jesus went because he loved us.**

Jesus had been in seclusion before this last journey to Jerusalem because the Jews were plotting to kill him. Just a few weeks before the Passover, he had been at Bethany, which was only about two miles east of Jerusalem. Mary and Martha had asked Jesus to come and heal their brother Lazarus, but Jesus had delayed his coming until Lazarus died (John 11). When he did arrive at Bethany, he raised Lazarus from the dead. It was a powerful miracle at a critical time in the Savior's ministry. Many who had come to comfort Mary and Martha in their grief put their faith in Jesus because of the miracle.

But when the chief priests and Pharisees heard of the miracle Jesus had performed so close to Jerusalem, they convened the Sanhedrin and plotted to kill Jesus. John tells us that Jesus ***"no longer moved about publicly among the Jews. Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples"*** (John 11:54). There he waited. But the leaders of the Jews, especially in Jerusalem, were waiting for Jesus too. They had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he was to report it to them so they could arrest Jesus.

Then the time came for Jews to go to Jerusalem for the Passover. The time came for Jesus too, but he knew that he would do much more than just celebrate the Passover. He and his disciples began the last journey to Jerusalem. The disciples knew the plot of the Jewish leaders. They were afraid for Jesus and for themselves. Earlier, when Jesus had gone to raise Lazarus, Thomas had said, ***"Let us also go, that we may die with him"*** (John 11:16). These men sensed danger, but it was time to celebrate the Passover. As many Jews began their pilgrimage Jesus and his disciples were among them.

Mark tells us here that Jesus led the way to Jerusalem. Surely Jesus knew about the plot to kill him. While the disciples followed in fear, Jesus walked ahead of them. The disciples were astonished. They saw through human eyes and did not understand that this was the time for the salvation of the world to be accomplished. Jesus knew that, and he was courageous and resolute.

At some point Jesus explained things to the disciples. He outlined his entire suffering and death. He knew about the coming betrayal by Judas and perhaps Judas had already made contact with the Jewish leaders. Even if he had not yet done that, Jesus saw it all ahead of time. As Jesus explained these events to his disciples, he saw all the details of his suffering. He spoke of the mockery, the spitting, the flogging, his own crucifixion, and his death. He saw it all clearly. But most importantly, he also knew that he would rise from the dead three days after his death.

This was God's plan and it had always been God's plan. Jesus had come to do all this. His arrival on earth to do this began at the time that the angels sang "*Glory to God in the highest.*" (Luke 2:14) That song in the Bethlehem night meant the death of God's son, Jesus. Through that death, the earth would have peace with God. When Jesus was only 12 years old, he knew that he must be about his Father's business. Now, this last journey to Jerusalem and everything that happened there was the Father's business. The time had come for it all to happen. We speak of it all so simply in the words of John 3:16: "*God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son*" (John 3:16).

Jesus did not try to avoid his task. He knew what his enemies would do to him in Jerusalem. He knew what he would do too: rise again. He accomplished our salvation. He paid for our sins. Jesus has paid enough because he rose again. It was all done for us. Only he could do it. If he hadn't resolutely and courageously headed for Jerusalem, our salvation would never have been accomplished.

As we walk with Jesus this Lenten season, let us not be fearful disciples who do not understand what happened in Jerusalem. We know! We understand that Jesus willingly and knowingly headed to the final Passover resolved to die. No one took his life from him. he willingly laid it down for us. His sacrifice brings us peace with God. His sacrifice brings us forgiveness.

His resurrection brings us victory over death. Praise God for the resolve of Jesus to die. We can be astonished too—astonished that Jesus would lead the way to Jerusalem ahead of his disciples and face his death resolutely and courageously.

Perhaps we must ask ourselves, why? Why did Jesus do this? We know that he did it for us, but why for us? The answer is found in one little word: love. Jesus went because he loved us.

Not only did Jesus know what was waiting for him in Jerusalem, but he also knew something about us. He knew then just as he knows now that we are weak human beings. We are troubled by life on earth regularly and often. When we search for the strength to stand up again and go on, we stumble and fall. We are battered by the criticism and anger of others. We are hurt when others fail to love us. We grow weary. We get frustrated and depressed. Each of us experiences pain and loss. That is part of being human.

We are helpless by ourselves and Jesus knows it. We are small, powerless creatures driven by forces we cannot control and sometimes don't understand. By ourselves we are heirs of death. No medical breakthrough will change that. Left to ourselves we will die not only an earthly death but we face an eternal death, an eternity of hell. On the road to Jerusalem, Jesus knew that not one human being could change that. No matter how much power anyone has, the situation remains the same. No matter how good we might be, we cannot do enough to earn forgiveness and eternal life.

Jesus knows that we are all sinful. He has seen all of the wars, the violence, the murders, the drugs, the sexual immorality and perversion in the world. He saw all the sins of us personally and of everyone in our society on the road to Jerusalem. But he saw even more. He has looked into our hearts, each one of them, and knows the sin within. Neither you nor I can hide our sins from him. We are all guilty before a holy, powerful God. Jesus knows us all too well. He shouldn't have had to die for such weak, powerless sinners, such rotten, wicked people.

Yet Jesus resolutely headed toward Jerusalem. He knew death and suffering awaited him. He did it for us – for weak, helpless, doomed sinners unable to change our destiny. Jesus knew it all. He had to take this journey for us. No one else could. He knew that if we were ever to have peace with God and enter heaven, he had to die for us.

Such love! It is undeserved, for we have nothing in our hearts or in our lives that could move him to do this. He loved us. He always loves us. Paul expressed the depth of God's love this way, ***"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us"*** (Romans 5:8).

Jesus began and completed the journey to Jerusalem because he loved us. The journey was conceived in eternity. It was first announced in the Garden of Eden to Adam and Eve when they had turned away from God. It was repeated for generations of sinners in the Old Testament. Jesus had come to walk resolutely toward Jerusalem one last time with his disciples. The time had come. It is the most important event of all time. God intends the results of this journey for men of all time. We do well to pay attention. We can be astonished too, not so much at the courage of Jesus to face death, but at the love of Jesus to face death to accomplish so much for us unworthy creatures.

Don't we all need to take this journey again this Lenten season? Each one of us needs to know that God loves me. When we are frustrated or weary or depressed or hurt, God loves me. He showed me the depth of his love in Jesus. We need to know about God's victory. We are powerless and helpless, and some day each of us will die. Jesus suffered, died, and then rose again. Because of him, whoever believes in him shall live forever.

Because of him you too will live forever. When you think of your failures and sins, you need to see Jesus walking toward the cross. You and I are lost and condemned sinners, but Jesus forgives us all our sins. So we want to make the journey again this Lenten season and hear all Jesus has done for each of us. Jesus leads the way. Let us follow him. Amen.