

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
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**Good Friday, April 10, 2009**

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Hymns: 166, 152, 153, 173, 271:7

Lessons: Psalm 22:1-19; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Luke 23:39-46.

Sermon Texts: 1 Peter 3:18a; Isaiah 53:3,4; John 5:24; Romans 8:34; Romans 8:1.

Sermon by Pastor M. H. Eibs

## ***FIRST MEDITATION***

1 Peter 3:18a: ***“Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”***

The theme for our first meditation is **WHY JESUS SUFFERED FOR US**. Peter gives us the answer: ***“Christ died for sins once for all.”*** It all began with Adam’s disobedience. The Apostle Paul writes: ***“Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners,”*** Romans 5:19. ***“Sin entered the world through one man,”*** Romans 5:12. This sinful condition of man is universal. It affects every human being. ***“There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”*** Romans 3:22-23.

God is a holy God and he demands perfection. We have come far short of that perfection God demands in his Word. The result is very evident in man’s way of living. ***“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies and the like,”*** Galatians 5:19-21. We all are guilty of many of these sins. Furthermore, we should think about the good things the Lord commands us to do that we have not done. ***“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it sins,”*** James 4:17. We have not kept God’s commandments, but have been disobedient. This is why Jesus had to suffer for us.

But why should Jesus have to suffer for our sins? Because this was God’s plan of salvation for sinful mankind. Jesus is our Divine Substitute. The Bible tells us this in many passages. ***“Jesus Christ ... gave himself for us,”*** Titus 2:14. ***“Jesus Christ laid down his life for us,”*** 1 John 3:16. ***“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us,”*** 2 Corinthians 5:21. We may also learn why Jesus could be our Substitute. It is because he is just and holy. ***“Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.”*** Speaking of Jesus as our great High Priest, the Bible says, ***“Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself,”*** Hebrews 7:27.

Jesus did all this, Peter tells us in our text, ***“to bring you to God.”*** We have been reconciled to God by Jesus. ***“God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them,”*** 2 Corinthians 5:19. Again Paul writes, ***“When we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son,”*** Romans 5:10. Paul also says about Jesus, ***“God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross,”*** Colossians 1:19-20. If Jesus had not done this for us, we would have had to suffer God’s wrath forever in hell, for this is what transgressors of the Law deserve. But, instead, we are saved from our sins and from hell. This is WHY Jesus suffered for us, and we should say, ***“Thousand, thousand, thanks, shall be, dearest Jesus unto Thee.”*** (Hymn 151).

## **SECOND MEDITATION**

Isaiah 53: 3.4: ***“He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.”***

From these words we want to meditate on **WHAT JESUS SUFFERED FOR US**. The lowly Son of Man was ***“despised and rejected by men.”*** Think of the first time Jesus preached in the synagogue at Nazareth. When Jesus preached to the people that he was their Messiah, we are told, ***“All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff,”*** Luke 4:28-29. All through Jesus’ ministry he was despised and the people rejected him as their Messiah. This led finally to the trial before Pontius Pilate where the Jewish unbelievers rejected him and shouted, ***“Crucify him, crucify him!”*** John 19:6. Jesus’ life on earth was in general the life of ***“a man of sorrows and familiar with suffering.”*** How it pained the Savior that the majority of men did not believe on him! Consider how he wept over the city of Jerusalem because of the unbelief of the people. All through Jesus’ ministry the majority of people despised him and rejected him as their Messiah. Today yet the majority of people reject Jesus as their Savior.

On this Good Friday, we are primarily concerned with what happened to Jesus on Calvary. Here it was that Isaiah’s words in our text were truly fulfilled. ***“He was despised, and we esteemed him not.”*** Jesus suffered more than any man ever suffered, for he was bearing the sins of the whole world. But, who cared? Few indeed! Many people looked at Jesus suffering on the cross. The rulers of the Jews mocked him and said, ***“He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One,”*** Luke 23:35. But it is ourselves we should be thinking about. It was **our** sins that brought Jesus to Calvary, but he was the one who was ***“stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.”*** Think of how Jesus suffered the night before his crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane when his agony was so great because he was bearing the sins of the whole world. His sweat was as great drops of blood falling to the ground. Think of the sight when the Roman Governor Pilate brought Jesus out of the judgment hall and said to the mob: ***“Here is the man”*** but the people shouted, ***“Crucify him, crucify him!”*** John 19:5.6. Jesus had just been whipped. His back was torn and bloody. His head was punctured with wounds from the crown of thorns. He had had no sleep for many hours. Then the people mocked him and pushed him around. Terrible as this was, it was nothing compared to what he suffered on the cross. We do not think only of the physical suffering of having nails driven through the hands and feet. But we think of that period of time on the cross when the sun was darkened for three hours and Jesus cried out: ***“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”*** Mark 15:34. This was the greatest suffering of all, for Jesus was bearing the sins of the whole world. He was suffering hell’s punishment. He was utterly forsaken by his heavenly Father. The full wrath of God was poured out upon him. This is what Jesus had to suffer for us in order to be our Savior and pay for our sins. Therefore we sing again, ***“Thousand, thousand, thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto Thee,”*** Hymn 151.

## **THIRD MEDITATION**

***”I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life,”*** John 5:24.; ***“Who is he that condemns? 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,” Romans 8:34.; **“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,”** Romans 8:1.

Having heard WHY Jesus suffered for us, and WHAT he suffered for us, we finally want to meditate on WHAT WE NOW NEED NEVER SUFFER. Our text tells us that whoever hears Jesus’ Word and believes in him will never be condemned. Paul asks who it is that can condemn us. And he firmly states that there is no condemnation for those who believe in Christ as their Savior. In all three passages of our text there is the same wonderful truth: NO CONDEMNATION! The word **“condemnation”** brings back to our memory the truth that God’s Law proclaims that **“the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men,”** Romans 5:18. God’s Word also tells us: **“The wages of sin is death,”** Romans 6:23. Eternal death in hell is what we all deserve. On Judgment Day the words of the psalmist will be shown to be true when he writes: **“The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong,”** Psalm 5:5.

But this condemnation and wrath of God we now do not need to suffer because of what Jesus suffered for us. Christ died for us. Now, no one, not the devil, nor anyone else, can condemn us because of our sins. Jesus paid for them in full. Jesus tells us that we shall not suffer everlasting condemnation but have eternal life. The Apostle Paul tells us that **“the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord,”** Romans 6:23b. Because of what Jesus suffered for us we are not condemned but we are accounted as righteous in God’s sight. What a precious gift of God’s love!

Who shall enjoy this precious gift of God in eternity? Jesus is very clear in stating: **“Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”** More specifically, those in whom the Holy Spirit has worked faith shall enjoy this gift of eternal salvation. Therefore, should we not most eagerly hear the Word preached?! And furthermore, we should repeat again: **“Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus unto Thee.”** May the Holy Spirit keep us all in the true faith in Jesus until that day when our earthly life is done. Then we can fully appreciate the truth that we will not be condemned, but enjoy life in heaven forever and ever. Amen.