



“RETURN TO THE LORD”

Wednesday Lenten Worship

March 6, 2024

7:00 p.m.

St. John’s Lutheran Church, Schubert

RETURN FROM FALSE WITNESS

AS WE GATHER

One of the most straightforward sayings in the Book of Proverbs states, “A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies” (Proverbs 14:5). A word of false witness can direct a series of actions in a deviant and destructive path. We find that negative action happening in the Passion account of our Lord, where we see Jesus standing before Caiaphas with a series of false witnesses seeking to defame the holy, innocent Lamb of God with untruths and lies. False witness can be a deadly weapon. Whenever we ask, as did the psalmist, “O Lord, open my lips” (Psalm 51:15), may what we then express always be true witness set in speech that declares the praises of God.

+ PREPARATION +

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

OPENING HYMN

“Come to Calvary’s Holy Mountain” (*TLH* 149)

**Jesus, Refuge of the weary, Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life’s desert dreary, Savior from the world above,
Oh, how oft Thine eyes, offended, Gaze upon the sinner’s fall!
Yet, upon the cross extended, Thou didst bear the pain of all.**

**Do we pass that cross unheeding, Breathing no repentant vow,
Tho’ we see Thee wounded, bleeding, See Thy thorn-encircled brow?
Yet Thy sinless death hath brought us Life eternal, peace, and rest;
Only what Thy grace hath taught us Calms the sinner’s stormy breast.**

**Jesus, may our hearts be burning With more fervent love for Thee!
May our eyes be ever turning To thy cross of agony
Till in glory, parted never From the blessed Savior’s side,
Graven in our hearts forever, Dwell the cross, the Crucified! Amen.**

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Titus 2:13b-14; 2 Timothy 2:11, 13

P Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
C **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents over disaster.**
P Jesus Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness
C **and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.**
P The saying is trustworthy for: If we have died with Him, we will also live with Him;
C **if we are faithless, He remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

TLH, p. 5

P Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness.
Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto Thee that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Thine infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Thy grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.
All **O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy Will and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**
P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us and hath given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgiveth us all our sins. To them that believe on His name He giveth power to become the sons of God and hath promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all.
C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.
All **Let Your blessing be upon us, heavenly Father, as we pass through these holy days in which we remember the sufferings and death of our Lord; and grant that as true and faithful witnesses we follow Him in willing obedience, learn His gracious humility, and be filled with His love; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who loved us and gave Himself for us.**
Amen.

+ WORD +

FIRST READING

Leviticus 24:13–16

P A reading from Leviticus, the twenty-fourth chapter.

¹³ Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ “Bring out of the camp the one who cursed, and let all who heard him lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him. ¹⁵ And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶ Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalms 27:11-14

P Teach me Your way, O LORD,

C **and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.**

P Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;

C **for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.**

P I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD

C **in the land of the living!**

P Wait for the LORD;

C **be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND READING

Acts 22:12–16

P A reading from Acts, the twenty-second chapter.

¹² And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³ came to me, and standing by me said to me, “Brother Saul, receive your sight.” And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. ¹⁴ And he said, “The God of our fathers appointed you to know His will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth; ¹⁵ for you will be a witness for Him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN VERSES

“Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing” (TLH 144, vs. 1-2)

**Jesus, grant that balm and healing In Thy holy wounds I find,
Ev'ry hour that I am feeling Pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within Tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning Keep me ere its first beginning.
Should some lust or sharp temptation Prove too strong for flesh and blood,
Let me think upon Thy Passion, And the breach is soon made good.
Or should Satan press me hard, Let me then be on my guard,
Saying, “Christ for me was wounded,” That the Tempter flee confounded.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 26:57-68

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

A *Then those who had seized Jesus led Him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. And Peter was following Him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put Him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said,*

P “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’”

A *And the high priest stood up and said,*

P “Have You no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?”

A *But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to Him,*

P “I adjure You by the living God, tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God.”

A *Jesus said to him,*

P “You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

A *Then the high priest tore his robes and said,*

P “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard His blasphemy. What is your judgment?”

A *They answered,*

P “He deserves death.”

A *Then they spit in His face and struck Him. And some slapped Him, saying,*

P “Prophecy to us, You Christ! Who is it that struck You?”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

WEEKDAY / CONFIRMATION CLASS READING

SERMON HYMN

“Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing” (*TLH* 144, vs. 3-5)

**If the world my heart entices On the broad and easy road
With its mirth and luring vices, Let me think upon the load
Thou didst carry and endure That I flee all thoughts impure,
Banishing each wild emotion, Calm and blest in my devotion.**

**Ev’ry wound that pains or grieves me, By Thy stripes, Lord, is made whole;
When I’m faint, Thy Cross revives me, Granting new life to my soul.
Yea, Thy comfort renders sweet Ev’ry bitter cup I meet;
For Thy all-atoning Passion Has procured my soul’s salvation.**

**O my God, my Rock and Tower, Grant that in Thy death I trust,
Knowing Death has lost his power Since Thou trodd’st him in the dust.
Savior, let Thine agony Ever help and comfort me;
When I die, be my Protection, Light and Life and Resurrection. Amen.**

SERMON

“Return from False Witness”

The OFFERINGS are presented

OFFERTORY

“Take My Life and Let It Be” (*TLH* 400; vs. 1, 4)

**Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use Ev’ry pow’r as Thou shalt choose. Amen.**

THE LITANY

L O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
L O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
L O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
L O Christ,
C **hear us.**
L God the Father in heaven,
C **have mercy.**
L God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C **have mercy.**
L God the Holy Spirit,
C **have mercy.**
L Be gracious to us.
C **Spare us, good Lord.**

L Be gracious to us.

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L From all sin, from all error, from all evil;
From the crafts and assaults of the devil; from sudden and evil death;
From pestilence and famine; from war and bloodshed; from sedition and from rebellion;
From lightning and tempest; from all calamity by fire and water; and from everlasting death:

C **Good Lord, deliver us.**

L By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity;
By Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial;
By Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the Day of Judgment:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L We poor sinners implore You

C **to hear us, O Lord.**

L To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church; to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living;

To put an end to all schisms and causes of offense; to bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived;

To beat down Satan under our feet; to send faithful laborers into Your harvest; and to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L To raise those who fall and to strengthen those who stand; and to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L To give to all peoples concord and peace; to preserve our land from discord and strife; to give our country Your protection in every time of need;

To direct and defend our president and all in authority; to bless and protect our magistrates and all our people;

To watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to protect and guide all who travel;

To grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings; to defend all orphans and widows and provide for them;

To strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children; to free those in bondage; and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts; to give and preserve for our use the kindly fruits of the earth; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

L O Christ,

C **hear us.**

L O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

L O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

L O Lord,

C **have mercy. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C **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.

CLOSING COLLECT

Luther's Evening Prayer

P Let us pray.

C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

BLESSING

- P The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit be and remain with you always.
- C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Round Me Falls the Night” (*TLH* 562)

**Round me falls the night; Savior, be my Light.
Thro’ the hours in darkness shrouded Let me see Thy face unclouded;
Let the glory shine In this heart of mine.**

**Earthly work is done, Earthly sounds are none.
Rest in sleep and silence seeking, Let me hear Thee softly speaking;
In my spirit’s ear Whisper, “I am near.”**

**Blessed, heav’nly Light, Shining thro’ earth’s night;
Voice that oft of love hast told me; Arms so strong to clasp and hold me —
Thou Thy watch wilt keep, Savior, o’er my sleep. Amen.**

SILENT PRAYER

POSTLUDE

Acknowledgments

The Lutheran Hymnal: St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, © 1941.

Hymn #145: Scripture: Mark 15: 29,30; Giesù sommo conforto; Jesus, Refuge of the Weary; Author: Girolamo Savonarola (1563); Translator: Jane F. Wilde (1853); Tune: O du Liebe; Source: “Musikalischer Christenschatz”, Basel (1745).

Hymn #144: Scripture: 1 Peter 2:24; Jesu, deine tiefen Wunden; Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing; Author: Johann Heermann (1644, ab.); Translation: composite; Tune: Der am Kreuz; Composer: Johann B. König (1738).

Hymn #400: Scripture: Ephesians 6:24; Take My Life and Let It Be; Author: Frances R. Havergal (1874); Tune: Patmos, Composer: William H. Havergal (1869).

Hymn #562: Scripture: Psalm 141:2; Round Me Falls the Night; Author: William Romanis (1908); Tune: Seelenbräutigam; Composer: Adam Drese (1697).

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