

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Suffering and Glory

Vespers Worship Service

May 22, 2023

AS WE GATHER

We don't like to suffer. In fact, there are times when we feel the slightest pain and we start feeling like we are being persecuted. We would much rather have God shatter those we perceive to be our enemies than deal with anything resembling suffering. When God deals with our "enemies," then, we will sing God's praises. But sometimes life is hard and sometimes it is hard because we are Christians, and our adversary, "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Jesus once said, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12). This same Jesus prayed for us, that our holy Father would keep us in His name. He knew suffering and is now experiencing glory. When we suffer because of our Christian faith, we share Christ's suffering and because He suffered, died, and rose again, we, too, will share that experience and join Him in His glory.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN

"Fight the Good Fight"

#664

1 Fight the good fight with all your might; Christ is your strength, and Christ your right. Lay hold on life, and it shall be Your joy and crown eternally.

2 Run the straight race through God's good grace; Lift up your eyes, and seek His face. Life with its way before us lies; Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.

3 Cast care aside, lean on your guide; His boundless mercy will provide. Trust, and enduring faith shall prove Christ is your life and Christ your love.

4 Faint not nor fear, His arms are near; He changes not who holds you dear; Only believe, and you will see That Christ is all eternally.

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: **(sing) Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!
People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Pastor: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

People: **Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which He obtained with His own blood.**

Pastor: Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

People: **And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.**

Pastor: Alleluia! Christ is risen!
People: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father, confident that He will hear and forgive us for Jesus' sake.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we have not always been proud to bear Your name. At times, we crumble in the face of the trials that come our way. We allow worries and anxieties to crowd out Your caring presence. Keep us in Your name, which You have given us in Baptism, and forgive us our sins for Jesus' sake.

Pastor: Our God hears our prayers and forgives our sins because of Jesus' perfect life, death, and resurrection. At the command of Christ and through the power of the cross and the empty tomb, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Go in peace!

People: Alleluia! Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.
O King of glory, Lord of Your Church, You suffered on the cross and defeated death and the devil for us.

People: **Make us one as You and the Father are one. Unite us with You and as Your Body, the Church, in suffering and celebration, that the world may be drawn to You and the power of the resurrection;**

Pastor: for You are risen and reign eternally with the Father and the Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: (sing) Amen.

EPISTLE 5:6-11

1 Peter 4:12-19;

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory

is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory^[a] and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”^[b] ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. ⁶ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰ And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 17:1-11

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventeenth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹⁷ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. ⁶ “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸ For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world,

but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

"I Know My Faith Is Founded"

#587

1 I know my faith is founded On Jesus Christ, my God and Lord; And this my faith confessing, Unmoved I stand on His sure Word. Our reason cannot fathom The truth of God profound; Who trusts in human wisdom Relies on shifting ground. God's Word is all-sufficient, It makes divinely sure; And trusting in its wisdom,
My faith shall rest secure.

2 Increase my faith, dear Savior, For Satan seeks by night and day To rob me of this treasure And take my hope of bliss away. But, Lord, with You beside me, I shall be undismayed; And led by Your good Spirit, I shall be unafraid. Abide with me, O Savior, A firmer faith bestow; Then I shall bid defiance To ev'ry evil foe.

3 In faith, Lord, let me serve You; Though persecution, grief, and pain Should seek to overwhelm me, Let me a steadfast trust retain; And then at my departure, Lord, take me home to You, Your riches to inherit As all You said holds true. In life and death, Lord, keep me
Until Your heav'n I gain, Where I by Your great mercy The end of faith attain.

SERMON

"The Answer to Anxiety"

1 Peter 5:7

Rev. Gordon W. Bruce

THE OFFERING *(baskets will be passed)*

PRESENTATION OF THE OFFERING

"We Give Thee But Thine Own"

#781vs1,6

We give Thee but Thine own, What e'er the gift may be; All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee. And we believe Thy Word, Though dim our faith may be: What e'er for Thine we do, O Lord, We do it unto Thee.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Petitions heard... (*ending with...*) Lord, in Your mercy,
People: **hear our prayer.**

LORD'S PRAYER (*found inside back cover of the hymnal*)

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
People: **(sing) Amen. Amen. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN *"Crown Him with Many Crowns" #525 vs 1-2,4*

1 **Crown Him with many crowns, The Lamb upon His throne;
 Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns All music but its own.
 Awake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And hail Him as
thy matchless king Through all eternity.**

2 **Crown Him the virgin's Son, The God incarnate born, Whose arm
those crimson trophies won Which now His brow adorn: Fruit of the mystic
rose, Yet of that rose the stem, The root whence mercy ever flows, The babe
of Bethlehem.**

4 **Crown Him the Lord of life, Who triumphed o'er the grave And rose
victorious in the strife For those He came to save. His glories now we sing,
Who died and rose on high, Who died eternal life to bring
And lives that death may die.**

SILENT PRAYER