

*"How Can You Be Sure  
God Loves You?"*

**"BUT GOD DEMONSTRATES  
HIS OWN LOVE FOR  
US IN THIS: WHILE WE WERE  
STILL SINNERS,  
CHRIST DIED FOR US."**

**ROMANS 5:8**

*St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church*

*Rev. Ronald C. Szep, pastor*

Sunday, February 28, 2021

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### **Second Sunday in Lent**

This Sunday we see God's seriousness in Lent in this: Salvation and suffering go hand in hand, for Jesus and for us too!

*Greeting by the minister*

*Please Stand*

#### **OPENING DIALOGUE:**

Minister: God, our Father, each day is a gift of your grace.

**Congregation: Your mercies are new every morning.**

M: Guide our steps by the light of your Word.

**C: Shield us from harm and keep us from evil.**

M: Better than life is your love.

**C: Put joy in our hearts and praise on our lips.**

#### **THE PRAYER FOR GRACE:**

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus

Christ, your Son, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## **SCRIPTURE LESSON: Mark 8:31-38**

There it is, the stark reality: the love of God is inseparably connected to the cross, both his and ours! The price of our salvation is steep indeed! The suffering was as real as the resurrection which followed it. The cross of the Christian is likewise as real as the glory which follows it. In both cases, no cross, no crown! In Christ's case the cross is redemptive. In our case the cross is the necessary consequence of his redemptive work, not its cause—but nevertheless an indispensable consequence. The cross is not all suffering. It is all suffering that comes as a result of following Jesus, e.g., persecution, the excruciating pain to self of denying self, even the struggle against both self-righteousness and despair. Our cross drives us to his cross both for forgiveness and for strength.

*<sup>31</sup> He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.*

*<sup>32</sup> He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.*

*<sup>33</sup> But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter.*

*“Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”*

*<sup>34</sup> Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.*

*<sup>35</sup> For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.*

*<sup>36</sup> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*

*<sup>37</sup> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*

*<sup>38</sup> If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.”*

*Please Be Seated*

**HYMN OF THE DAY: CW Hymn 434**  
**“Lord, You I Love with All My Heart”**

Text: Martin M. Schalling, 1532–1608; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Tune: HERZLICH LIEB HAB ICH DICH, O HERR (887 887 88 88 488) *Zwey Bücher . . . Tabulatur*, Strassburg, 1577, alt.



1 Lord, you I love with all my heart; I pray you ne'er from  
2 Lord God, 'twas your rich boun-ty gave My bod-y, soul, and  
3 Lord, let at last your an-gels come; To A-bram's bos-om



me de-part; With ten-der mer-cies cheer me. Earth has no  
all I have In this poor life of la-bor. Lord, grant that  
bear me home That I may die un-fear-ing. And in its



plea-sure I would share; Heav-en it-self were void and bare  
I in ev-'ry place May glo-ri-fy your lav-ish grace  
nar-row cham-ber keep My bod-y safe in peace-ful sleep



If you, Lord, were not near me. And should my heart for  
And serve and help my neigh-bor. Let no false doc-trine  
Un-til your re-ap-pear-ing. And then from death a-



sor-row break, My trust in you no one could shake.  
me be-guile; Let Sa-tan not my soul de-file.  
wak-en me That my own eyes with joy may see,



You are the trea - sure I have sought; Your pre - cious blood my  
Give strength and pa - tience un - to me To bear my cross - es  
O Son of God, your glo - rious face, My Sav - ior and my



soul has bought. Lord Je - sus Christ, My God and Lord,  
will - ing - ly. Lord Je - sus Christ, My God and Lord,  
Fount of grace. Lord Je - sus Christ, My prayer at - tend,



my God and Lord, For - sake me not! I trust your Word.  
my God and Lord, For - sake me not! I trust your Word.  
my prayer at - tend, And I will praise you with - out end.

**SERMON:** based on Romans 5:1-11

**“How Can You Be Sure God Loves You?”**

To the world the real meaning of Lent makes no sense at all. Only the Christian gets it, and that as a result of the miracle of faith worked by the proclamation of the gospel. And this is that miracle: Christ the holy one, Christ the innocent, suffered for man the sinner, for man the guilty. The suffering was real. So too was its result: Christ suffering for sinners and in their place makes them innocent in God’s sight. Because we would never get the point or hang on to it, we suffer, too. Our suffering, whether from the purifying and purging hand of God or from his permission granted to the devil to scourge us as he scourged Job and Paul, helps us to despair of ourselves and our own strength and to live by faith in his suffering for us sinners. Reconciled we now cling to him confidently in suffering as we await the final manifestation of the glory of his resurrection. Therefore we embrace the suffering Savior and do not run away from our own suffering; both are gifts of grace for sinners who have become saints by virtue of Christ’s suffering and through faith in his merit. Only a Christian can grasp that.

*5 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*<sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.*

*<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;*

<sup>4</sup> *perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

<sup>5</sup> *And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

<sup>6</sup> *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

<sup>7</sup> *Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.*

<sup>8</sup> *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

<sup>9</sup> *Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

<sup>10</sup> *For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

<sup>11</sup> *Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.*

*Please Stand*

**PROFESSION OF FAITH: The Apostles' Creed** *(read in unison)*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**PRAYERS and BLESSING:**

**Luther's Morning Prayer** *(in unison)*

**I thank you, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have kept me this night from all harm and danger. Keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please you. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

*Special prayers and intercessions: optional, read by the minister*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent Prayer*

M: Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer** (*in unison*)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

*Please Be Seated*

**CLOSING HYMN: CW Hymn 120**  
***"What Wondrous Love Is This"***

Text: *A General Selection of . . . Spiritual Songs*, Lynchburg, 1811, alt.

Tune: WONDROUS LOVE (12 9 66 12 9) *Southern Harmony*, New Haven, 1835.



1 What won - drous love is this, O my soul, O my  
 2 When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down, sink - ing  
 3 To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will  
 4 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul! What won - drous love is this, O my soul!  
 down, When I was sink - ing down, sink - ing down,  
 sing; To God and to the Lamb I will sing;  
 on; And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.



What won - drous love is this That caused the Lord of  
 When I was sink - ing down Be - neath God's right - eous  
 To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great I  
 And when from death I'm free, I'll sing his love for



bliss To bear the dread - ful curse for my soul, for my  
 frown, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul, for my  
 Am, While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing, I will  
 me, And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on, I'll sing



soul, To bear the dread - ful curse for my soul!  
 soul, Christ laid a - side his crown for my soul.  
 sing, While mil - lions join the theme, I will sing.  
 on, And through e - ter - ni - ty I'll sing on.