

HIS FINAL STEPS

Led to a Fig Tree

Abiding Word Evangelical Lutheran Church
February 22, 2023 Ash Wednesday

Hymn: Jesus, I Will Ponder Now



1 Je - sus, I will pon - der now On your ho - ly
 2 Make me see your great dis - tress, An - guish, and af -
 3 Yet, O Lord, not thus a - lone Make me see your
 4 If my sins give me a - larm And my con - science
 5 Grant that I your pas - sion view With re - pent - ant



pas - sion; With your Spir - it me en - dow
 flic - tion, Bonds and stripes and wretch - ed - ness
 pas - sion, But its cause to me make known
 grieve me, Let your cross my fear dis - arm;
 griev - ing. Let me not bring shame to you



For such med - i - ta - tion. Grant that I in love
 And your cru - ci - fix - ion; Make me see how scourge
 And its ter - mi - na - tion. Ah! I al - so and
 Peace of con - science give me. Help me see for - give -
 By un - ho - ly liv - ing. How could I re - fuse



and faith May the im - age cher - ish Of your suf -
 and rod, Spear and nails did wound you, How for them
 my sin Wrought your deep af - flic - tion; This in - deed
 ness won By your ho - ly pas - sion. If for me
 to shun Ev - 'ry sin - ful pleas - ure Since for me



f'ring, pain, and death That I may not per - ish.
 you died, O God, Who with thorns had crowned you.
 the cause has been Of your cru - ci - fix - ion.
 he slays his Son, God must have com - pas - sion!
 God's on - ly Son Suf - fered with - out meas - ure?

6 Graciously my faith renew;
 Help me bear my crosses,
 Learning humbleness from you,
 Peace mid pain and losses.
 May I give you love for love!
 Hear me, O my Savior,
 That I may in heav'n above
 Sing your praise forever.

INSTRUCTION FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

Silence for reflection and self-examination

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you:

C: **God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.**

M: If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness,

C: **We lie and do not live by the truth.**

M: If we claim to be without sin,

C: **We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.**

C: **Father, I have sinned against you and am no longer worthy to be called your child. Yet in mercy you sacrificed your only Son to purge away my guilt. For his sake, O God, be merciful to me, a sinner, and in the joy of the Holy Spirit let me serve you all my days.**

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Those who desire to receive the sign of ashes come forward.

M: Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

After all who desire have received ashes, the minister says:

M: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation

C: **That we may show forth your glory in the world.**

M: By the cross and suffering of your Son, O Lord,

C: **Bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.**

ABSOLUTION

M: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Upon this, your confession, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.
During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

Psalm 51D God, Be Merciful to me

**1 God, be merciful to me, on your grace I rest my plea;
your compassions overflow, blot out my transgressions now;
wash me, make me pure within, cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.**

**2 My transgressions I confess, grief and guilt my soul oppress;
I have sinned against your grace and provoked you to your face;
I confess your judgment just, speechless, in your mercy trust.**

**3 I am evil, born in sin; you desire all truth within.
You alone my Savior are, teach your wisdom to my heart;
make me pure, your grace bestow, wash me whiter than the snow.**

**4 Broken, humbled to the dust by your wrath and judgment just,
let my contrite heart rejoice and in gladness hear your voice;
from my sins, O hide your face, blot them out in boundless grace.**

Isaiah 59:12-20

¹²For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us. Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities: ¹³rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, inciting revolt and oppression, uttering lies our hearts have conceived. ¹⁴So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. ¹⁵Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice. ¹⁶He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm achieved salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him. ¹⁷He put on righteousness as his breastplate, and the helmet of salvation on his head; he put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak. ¹⁸According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies and retribution to his foes; he will repay the islands their due.

¹⁹From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along.

²⁰“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD.

2 Corinthians 7:8-13a

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—⁹yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow

brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³By all this we are encouraged.

Psalm 51D God, Be Merciful to me

**5 Gracious God, my heart renew, make my spirit right and true;
let me not abandoned be, let your Spirit dwell in me;
your salvation's joy impart, steadfast make my willing heart.**

**6 Sinners then shall learn from me and to God restored shall be;
Savior, all my guilt remove, and my tongue shall sing your love;
touch my silent lips, O Lord, and my mouth shall praise accord.**

**7 No attempted sacrifice has acceptance in your eyes;
broken hearts are in your sight more than sacrificial rite;
contrite spirit, pleading cries, you, O God, will not despise.**

**8 Prosper Zion in your grace and her broken walls replace;
then our righteous sacrifice shall delight your holy eyes;
freewill off'rings, gladly made, on your altar shall be laid.**

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

¹“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

⁵“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

C: All we like sheep have gone astray, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. By his wounds we are healed.

SERMON HYMN: Fruitful Trees, the Spirit’s Sowing

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**1 Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, may we ripen and increase,
fruit to life eternal growing, rich in love and joy and peace.**

**2 Laden branches freely bearing gifts the Giver loves to bless;
here is fruit that grows by sharing, patience, kindness, gentleness.**

**3 Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal,
teach us, as the years fly faster, goodness, faith, and self-control.**

**4 Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, may we grow till harvests cease;
till we taste, in life unending, heaven's love and joy and peace.**

Sermon on Mark 11:12-14,20-25: His Final Steps Led to a Fig Tree

¹²The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. ¹³Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.

²⁰In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE OFFERTORY

Sung to the tune of O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

C: What language shall I borrow To thank you, dearest Friend,

For all Your dying sorrow, Your pity without end?

Oh, make me Yours forever; And should I fainting prove,

Lord, let me never, never Forsake your dying love!

THE PREFACE

Sung to the tune of O Sacred Head, Now Wounded

M: The Lord is with His people; The Lord God be with you.

C: The Lord is with His servants; The Lord be with you, too.

M: Your grateful hearts now raise Him

C: To God we lift them high.

'Tis right to thank and praise Him Who to his world draws nigh

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

M: Always and everywhere it is right to give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who gave His life on the cross for us that, freed from the power of sin and death, we might have eternal joy in Your presence, renewed in faith and life. And so, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise Your name and join their unending hymn:

THE SANCTUS

Sung to the tune of Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord, Heav'n and earth proclaim the story

Of Your majesty adored, Of your kingdom, pow'r, and glory.

With hosannas now we meet You; With our palms and praises greet You:

Hail! Hosanna! Blest is He Who in God's own name draws near us!

Hail! Hosanna! Blest are we Since we have God's love to cheer us:

Blood outpoured and body broken Of eternal love the token.

THE CONSECRATION

THE AGNUS DEI

Sung to the tune of *O Dearest Jesus*

**C: Jesus, the Lamb of God, Have mercy on us!
Jesus, who bore our sins, Have mercy on us!
Jesus, Redeemer of the world, Have mercy!
Give us Your peace, Lord!**

THE DISTRIBUTION

THE NUNC DIMMITIS

Sung to the tune of *Our Father, by Whose Name*

**C: In peace, Lord, at Your Word, Now let Your servant go;
For I have seen and heard What all the earth must know:
Salvation for the world is here!
And Israel's Light shines bright and clear
Upon the nations far and near.**

**Eternal praise and fame Be to our God alone!
We proudly bear His name, Proclaim what he has done.
For our redemption, full and free,
To Father, Son, and Spirit be
All praise and thanks eternally!**

THE BENEDICTION

Sung to the tune of *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

**M: The good Lord bless and keep you, Lift up His shining face,
With favor look upon you And grant eternal peace.**
**C: To Father, Son, and Spirit, Most gracious One-in-Three,
Be glory, praise, and blessing Now and eternally!**