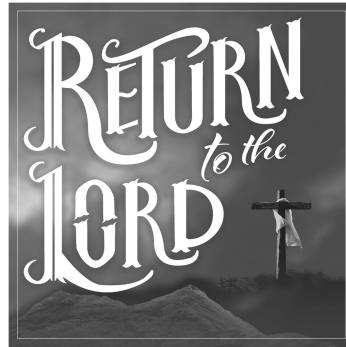




Fourth Midweek Lenten Service Thursday, March 11, 2021

Return from False Witness

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” (Prov 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.



ORGAN PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE TOWER BELL

OPENING HYMN - LSB 420 “Christ, the Life of All the Living”

INVOCATION

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

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:5-6

- P** Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
- C** **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.**
- P** Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
- C** **listen to my plea for grace.**
- P** In the day of my trouble I call upon You,
- C** **for You answer me.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness. Together we sing stanza 1 of the hymn “Lord, to You I Make Confession.”

• VERSES “Lord, to You I Make Confession”

1 Lord, to You I make confession:

I have sinned and gone astray,
I have multiplied transgression,
Chosen for myself my way.
Led by You to see my errors,
To Your mercy, Lord, I flee.

2 For Your Son has suffered for me,

Giv’n Himself to rescue me,
Died to save me and restore me,
Reconciled and set me free.
Jesus’ cross alone can vanquish;
Every sin was conquered there.

P The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

C Amen.

• VERSE “Lord, to You I Make Confession”

3 Lord, on You I cast my burden—

Sink it in the deepest sea!
Let me know Your gracious pardon,
Cleanse me from iniquity.
Let Your Spirit leave me never;
Make Yours forevermore.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray.

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.

C Amen.

FIRST READING *Leviticus 24:13-16*

¹³Then 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. ¹⁵And speak to the people of Israel, saying, Whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. ¹⁶Whoever 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.

PSALM

Psalm 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*

¹²“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, ¹³came 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. ¹⁴And 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; ¹⁵for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. ¹⁶And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.’

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 26:57-68*

⁵⁷Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸And 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. ⁵⁹Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” ⁶³But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him, “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “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.” ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your judgment?” They answered, “He deserves death.” ⁶⁷Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

SERMON HYMN - LSB 423 “Jesus, Refuge of the Weary”

- 1 Jesus, refuge of the weary,
 Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
 Fountain in life’s desert dreary,
 Savior from the world above:
 Often have Your eyes, offended,
 Gazed upon the sinner’s fall;
 Yet upon the cross extended,
 You have borne the pain of all.

- 2 Do we pass that cross unheeding,
 Breathing no repentant vow,
 Though we see You wounded, bleeding,
 See Your thorn-encircled brow?
 Yet Your sinless death has brought us
 Life eternal, peace, and rest;
 Only what Your grace has taught us
 Calms the sinner’s deep distress.

- 3 Jesus, may our hearts be burning
 With more fervent love for You;
 May our eyes be ever turning
 To behold Your cross anew
 Till in glory, parted never
 From the blessed Savior’s side,
 Graven in our hearts forever,
 Dwell the cross, the Crucified.

SERMON “Return from False Witness” *Matthew 26:57-68*

THEME HYMN “Break Your Hearts”

Break your hearts with mourning
And your pride in two,
Ash and grief adorning
Your repentance true.
With your tears and fasting,
From your God discern
His ways everlasting:
To your Lord return.

See your Savior dying,
Hung upon the tree.
It is vain denying
What is plain to see:
While His heart is breaking,
Still your God will earn
Freedom in the making.
To your Lord return.

Gather all in number
From both far and near;
Even those in slumber
Wait for trumpets clear.
When the Lord grants blessing,
Broken hearts will learn
Joy beyond expressing;
To your Lord return.

ORGAN OFFERTORY and Steward *MINUTE*

- Offering Prayer

(Tonight's Offering: National Youth Gathering)

THE PRAYERS

LORD'S PRAYER

CLOSING COLLECT

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 - LSB 879 "Stay With Us"

- 1 Stay with us, till night has come:
Our praise to You this day be sung.
Bless our bread,
Open our eyes:
Jesus, be our great surprise.
- 2 Walk with us, our spirits sigh:
Hear when our weary spirits cry,
Feel again
Our loss, our pain:
Jesus, take us to Your side.
- 3 Walk with us, the road will bend:
Make all our weeping, wailing end.
Wipe our tears,
Forgive our fears:
Jesus, lift the heavy cross.

**4 Talk with us, till we behold
A joyful life You will unfold:
Heal our eyes
To see the prize:
Jesus, take us to the light.**

**5 Stay with us, till day is done:
No tears nor dark shall dim the sun.
Cheer the heart,
Your grace impart:
Jesus, bring eternal life.**

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✠ Soli Deo Gloria ✠
To God Alone Be Glory

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