

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church  
Arvada, Colorado***

***Midweek Family Devotion in Absence***

***Midweek of Lent 5  
April 1, 2020***

**INVOCATION**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

**THE PSALM** *Psalms 143*

<sup>1</sup> Hear my prayer, O LORD; give ear to my pleas for mercy!  
In your faithfulness answer me, in your righteousness!

<sup>2</sup> Enter not into judgment with your servant,  
for no one living is righteous before you.

<sup>3</sup> For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground;  
he has made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

<sup>4</sup> Therefore my spirit faints within me;  
my heart within me is appalled.

<sup>5</sup> I remember the days of old; I meditate on all that you have done;  
I ponder the work of your hands.

<sup>6</sup> I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

<sup>7</sup> Answer me quickly, O LORD! My spirit fails  
Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.  
Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

<sup>9</sup> Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!  
I have fled to you for refuge.

<sup>10</sup> Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!  
Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground!

<sup>11</sup> For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life!  
In your righteousness bring my soul out of trouble!

<sup>12</sup> And in your steadfast love you will cut off my enemies,  
and you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant.

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.

**FIRST READING** *Hebrews 10:11-39*

<sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat

down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. <sup>15</sup> And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying, <sup>16</sup> “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws on their hearts, and write them on their minds,” <sup>17</sup> then he adds, “I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.” <sup>18</sup> Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, <sup>20</sup> by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, <sup>21</sup> and since we have a great priest over the house of God, <sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. <sup>23</sup> Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. <sup>24</sup> And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, <sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. <sup>26</sup> For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? <sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again, “The Lord will judge his people.” <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. <sup>32</sup> But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, <sup>33</sup> sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. <sup>34</sup> For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. <sup>35</sup> Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. <sup>37</sup> For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay, <sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” <sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. (ESV)

#### **SECOND READING** *Matthew 16:13-20*

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup> Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. (ESV)

**SERMON HYMN** *Lutheran Service Book 614* ““As Surely as I Live,” God Said”

## **SERMON**

Absolution or forgiveness is of two kinds: human and divine, our personal forgiveness between each other and God's forgiveness toward us. When it comes to human forgiveness, the Bible tells us that we must forgive in our hearts those who sin against us, even if we do not tell someone who has sinned against us that we forgive them. When someone sins against us and then asks for our forgiveness, then it is necessary for us to tell them that we forgive them. That is human forgiveness or personal absolution. But what we call "Holy Absolution" is when God forgives and absolves us for the sake of Christ. That is what we are mainly interested in focusing on in this homily.

The basis for Holy Absolution is the atoning death of Christ on the cross. When Jesus suffered and died, he made the payment for our sins, all sins of all people, to God the Father. We sinners are the ones who deserve temporal and eternal punishment because of our original sin and actual sins. But God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, the incarnate Christ, to pay for our sins so that all who believe in him, trust in him, have faith in him will have eternal life. This faith is created by the Gospel in order to receive Christ's Word and Sacraments, including Holy Absolution, for our salvation.

As we see in the Gospel reading for today, Christ instituted the apostolic ministry to exercise his keys to lock and unlock the kingdom of heaven, depending upon whether a person is repentant or not. For repentant Christians, the pastor in the stead and by the command of Christ forgives you all your sins. This is not human forgiveness; it is not the forgiveness of the pastor; but it is Christ speaking through him to accomplish God's forgiveness, Christ's Holy Absolution within you. On the cross, Christ cried out, "Father forgive them!" After his resurrection, Christ instituted the Holy Ministry to offer Holy Absolution, God's forgiveness to the penitent. Through this divine absolution, you receive the Holy Spirit as you do also in the preaching, teaching, and meditation on God's Word, in Holy Baptism as we heard last week, and in Holy Communion as we will hear next week. So, dear Christian, rejoice in this great gift that Christ gives to you. Amen!

## **KYRIE**

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

## **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.

## **APOSTLES' CREED**

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

**COLLECT FOR PEACE**

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**BENEDICTION**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN** *Lutheran Service Book 434 “Lamb of God, Pure and Holy”*

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