

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Midweek Lent 6 - April 1, 2020

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Hymn #452 (TLH) - *"The Son of God Goes Forth to War"***

The Son of God goes forth to war  
A kingly crown to gain.  
His blood-red flag streams wide and far  
Who follows in his train?  
All those who drink Christ's cup of woe,  
Triumphant over pain,  
And patient bear their cross below  
They follow in his train.

Saint Stephen, looking to the sky,  
Saw heav'n beyond the grave  
The Son of Man by God on high,  
And called on him to save.  
Like Christ, the pardon rare displayed,  
While on the cross in pain,  
This saint for his assailants prayed  
Who follows in his train?

A glorious band - the chosen few,  
On whom the Spirit came  
Because sure hope in Christ they knew  
In peace met cross and flame.  
They suffered ridicule and scorn,  
With hatred they were slain.  
Now crowns their faithful heads adorn

## Who follows in their train?

A noble army, robed in white,  
From ev'ry tribe and race,  
Around the Savior's throne delight  
To see his glorious face.  
They held the narrow path to heav'n  
Through peril, toil, and pain.  
O God, to us may grace be giv'n  
To follow in their train!

### **Confession of Sins:**

**P:** Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C:** **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

**P:** Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C:** **Amen.**

### **The Passion History - Part 6**

Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with him to be executed. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means, "The place of a skull."). They offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. They crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Now it was the third hour when they crucified him. Pilate also had a sign written and fastened to the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where

Jesus was crucified near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the king of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic which was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it. Instead, let's cast lots to see who gets it." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So this is what the soldiers did. Then they sat down and were keeping watch over him there. The people stood watching. And even the rulers were ridiculing him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, the chosen one!" People who passed by kept insulting him, shaking their heads and saying, "You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests, experts in the law and elders kept mocking him. They said, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself. If he's the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now, if he wants him, because he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way even the criminals who were crucified with him kept insulting him. One of the criminals hanging there was blaspheming him, saying, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? We are punished justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Amen I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The sun was darkened. At the ninth hour Jesus shouted with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "Listen, he is calling Elijah!" After this, knowing that everything had now been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst." A jar full of wine vinegar was sitting there. Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, and soaked it with vinegar. Then he put it on a stick and gave him a drink. When Jesus had taken the wine vinegar, he said, "It is finished." Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" When he had said

this, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Suddenly, the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and rocks were split. Tombs were opened and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection, went into the holy city, and appeared to many people. When the centurion and those who were guarding Jesus with him saw the earthquake and how he cried out and breathed his last, they were terrified and began to glorify God, saying, "This man really was righteous. Truly this was the Son of God!" All the crowds gathered to see this spectacle. When they saw what had happened, they returned home beating their chests. All those who knew him, and many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had served him were there watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. Since it was Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses over the Sabbath. Because that Sabbath was special, they asked Pilate to have their legs broken and the bodies taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and then of the other who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. Immediately blood and water came out. The man who saw it has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. Indeed, these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones will be broken." Again another Scripture says, "They will look at the one they pierced." (EHV)

### **The Apostles' Creed:**

**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.**

**Hymn #202 - *"If God Had Not Been on Our Side"***

**If God had not been on our side  
And had not come to aid us,  
Our foes with all their pow'r and pride  
Would surely have dismayed us,  
For we, his flock, would have to fear  
The devil's wolves, both far and near,  
Who rise in might against us.**

**Their furious wrath, did God permit,  
Would surely have consumed us  
And as a deep and yawning pit  
With life and limb entombed us.  
A hellish storm would o'er us roll  
From Satan, who desires our soul  
And seeks to overwhelm us.**

**Blest be the Lord, who foiled their threat  
That they could not devour us.  
Our souls, like birds, escaped their net;  
They could not overpower us.  
The snare is broken - we are free!  
Our helper and our strength is he  
Who made the earth and heavens.**

**The Sermon:      John 19:30  
                          "Reconnaissance Report: Know Your Enemy"  
                          Pastor John Huebner**

*John 19:30 - For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

When you Google something, that search engine actually only searches about 4 percent of everything out there in cyberspace. Something called the deep web has the other 96 percent - all of which is hidden to most people. There is some technical stuff and some military stuff on the deep web, as well as secret, forbidden communications and more.

The really scary part is that there is another hidden part of the deep web. That hidden part is called the dark web, where you can find stolen credit card numbers for sale, mail order marijuana, killers for hire, sex trafficking, medical experiments on people, illegal betting, and much more. To read about it sends shivers up your spine!

When God tells us there is a darkness to this world, he includes SOMEONE in that darkness - an enemy who is both invisible and evil. We are in a struggle with this darkness. We should not enter battle without knowing something about whom we will face. Let's look at God's reconnaissance report. We are facing off against the ruler of darkness.

If a thug jumps you on the street or invades your home, you will defend yourself in whatever way you can. You have a flesh-and-blood person to deal with, somebody you can see and strike. But listen to St. Paul's chilling words. Our biggest battle isn't with our neighborhood gang. It's with an invisible, mysterious, sinister, evil force. He warned us: *"Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"* (Ephesians 6:12). St. Paul urges Christians to arm themselves with God's armor, especially his Word, because we are facing a huge struggle - a battle that is a lifelong wrestling match - a battle that if we were to lose it, would result in eternal death and damnation. We face a dangerous enemy. We're not talking about fictional ghosts. We're talking about the devil and demons, which are all evil and real angels, who are 100 percent on the dark side. As unrepentant followers of their leader, Satan, the goal of demons is to destroy you and me and everyone else—destroy our faith, destroy our life, destroy our hope, and destroy our soul. There is nothing fascinating or attractive or funny about Satan, whose very name means "enemy."

Paul's references to rulers, authorities, and powers indicate that the evil angels are organized in a military fashion with leaders and soldiers who follow the ringleader—Satan. He is the chief ruler, head general, authority, and power. We make sure to call them demons because there must be no confusion between them and the millions of angels still in heaven and around us here on earth who are always working for our good. On the other hand, the demons bring darkness with them - a spiritual darkness that can smother our souls like one of those blankets firemen use to cover a person on fire.

The goal of all demons is to remove saving faith from the earth - to steal it from you and me and to prevent unbelievers, who are already cut off from God by their unbelief, from hearing about God's grace for them. That's what spiritual darkness is - being separated from our Savior. It's walking and talking and appearing to be doing the things of a normal life but having a dead soul inside. It's being dead to God. No desire for him. No love for him. No faith in him. Satan hates you. He is actively waging war on you. The devil wants your soul to be dead so that you end up dead eternally.

God's reconnaissance report goes on to compare our enemy to a hungry wild beast. The apostle Peter said it like this: *"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour"* (1 Peter 5:8).

It's startling to see this picture because it means this dark world is not a static thing. It doesn't just sit there like your bedroom's darkness, which goes away when you turn the light on. Lions don't stay in one place. They are on the prowl. So the spiritual darkness is like a blackness creeping out of your bedroom to put out all the lights in the house and on your street and beyond. It's an active, evil darkness!

If we have friends or family members who are his victims at the present time, it's time for us to get serious in this battle. Let's find ways to start conversations about the hope we have in Jesus. And let's pray for them. We also pray for ourselves, because God tells us we are caught in this battle with a liar.

At some point in your life, somebody lied to you. You are more careful now when people make promises, right? That's sad, because if someone is not honest, we know we can't trust that person. Jesus told the Jewish people who were plotting to kill him about who was behind their dark plot: *"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies"* (John 8:44). Jesus knew Satan. He knew that he has the blackest, vilest, most deceitful heart. He is a hater of God, and he hates you and me. He even wants to murder us eternally in hell, where the screaming will never stop.

If you speak English or Spanish or another language as your native language, you use that language all the time, every day. Satan's native language is lying. He uses it all the time, every day. All he wants is to hurt, damage, and destroy. The name devil means "slanderer; one who brings charges with hostile intent." He's angry and jealous of what God has given us in Jesus. He works hardest at getting us to doubt or question God's Word. He especially encourages us not to read or study it. That's why we have Bible classes here in order to keep him off balance.

He likes to use two favorite and effective lies. First, he tells you that you are such a good person that you don't need Jesus because God could never damn you to hell. The second lie is just the opposite but no less effective. He will tell you that you are so bad that not even God would ever want you. Both lies. He wants us to believe that God is not fair and doesn't care about you or me. He wants us to get deeper into his darkness: to be angry at God, to reject God's promises, and to hate God. He wants you to abandon God's Word so that you will be totally, spiritually dark and dead.

That's why the Son of God went forth to war! It's not hopeless. Our reconnaissance report for battle includes a clear report on what God has done for us: he has put a light in the darkness.

We turned the lights on for worship today. And light always defeats darkness! Even a small candle pushes back the darkness of a big cave. More important, another light shines here, far more powerful than the bulbs shining forth above our heads! That light led you here. That light has pushed out the very darkness that Satan has tried to shove into your heart. That light has given you hope and faith and a future in heaven so bright that the Bible describes us as no longer needing the sun or moon for light at all for eternity! St. John is talking about Jesus when he says, "*In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it*" (John 1:4,5). Did you catch the battle in that verse? "Darkness has not overcome it." Our hero, Jesus, fought against our dark enemy Satan many times, as we find it recorded on the pages of the New Testament. Most of the time, Jesus used his Word to defeat him. Sometimes he used miracles to undo the damage of illness and death that Satan had caused.

In the Star Wars movies, Luke Skywalker defeats the evil Darth Vader in a battle of light sabers. In real life, both Jesus and Satan used the cross as their war weapon. Satan thought he had beaten Jesus when Jesus died on the cross. Of course, we know that Jesus used the cross as his ultimate weapon to beat all the forces of darkness - the devil, the world, our sinful flesh, and death itself. Satan is defeated eternally, but like a terrorist who is cornered, he wants to take as many of us as possible with him to hell.

Thank God that you and I have been given the wonderful gift of faith in Jesus. Through that faith we see Jesus for who he really is - the Savior of the world who brings forgiveness and freely gives eternal life to those who believe in him: "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind" (John 1:4). I can't see anything when I'm in the dark, so I need to get my flashlight to walk around without smashing into something. But it's much worse for those who do not trust in Jesus, because they are existing in spiritual darkness. There's only one flashlight for that kind of darkness, and it is Jesus. Jesus is life, the source of all light and life.

Our vision is precious to us. Our mothers always warned about poking out an eye. Jesus once healed a man who had been born blind. That was before we had white canes with red tips. After Jesus had healed him, he came home seeing and, even under fierce questioning by those who hated Jesus, kept saying the same thing: "*One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!*" (John 9:25).

As wonderful as that sight is, to come out of spiritual blindness and darkness into the light is infinitely better. It means that I can be totally honest with myself and admit the mess of my life. I see what sin really is and how much damage it does to me and others. I see why God hates it so much because it damns. I confess it freely to my Lord and trust him to forgive every last evil thought, word, and deed, because I see HIM! He's the Light of my life, the one who has bought and paid for me with his own life! He has shown me what grace is. He has opened my eyes to see all God has done for me because he loves me.

I see a grand purpose in life: to live in gratitude and grace, to be the best I can be for him who died for me! I live not for my glory, but for his! I look at my family members as precious blood-bought souls whose mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual lives are extremely important because I desire to live with

them in eternity! Whatever I can do to help them grow in Jesus is what I want to do. I look at unbelievers not with disgust and anger, but with sadness and great desire to do all I can to help them see. I look at work as a means of giving God glory. I look at you, fellow believers, as special friends in Jesus, and I love and appreciate you all and pray for you because you matter to me.

And because of Jesus, I can see through death into eternity, where there is a real place alongside millions of fellow believers like my family and all of you, where we'll be with Jesus forever in a life filled with so much wonder and beauty and joy and love and action that is far beyond my wildest dreams. Oh, this light is so amazing! Amen.

### **Prayers:**

Lord Jesus Christ, we pray that, during this season of Lent, You would give us an extra measure of Your Holy Spirit, that we might lead our lives in true repentance for our sins, realizing that we were bought at a tremendous price, that we might honor our God and Savior with all that we say, think, and do. O Lamb of God, who took away the sin of the world, may the story of Your love be heard in every corner of the earth, and may many willing hearers be found in every land. Let the sinful children of Adam learn of the great love You have shown us so that, in true and heartfelt contrition, we may confess our sins, cling to the forgiveness won at Your cross, and be led by Your Word to serve You; and our fellowmen, for whose souls, as well as for ours, You shed Your holy and precious blood. Amen.

### **The 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.**

**Hymn #125 - *"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"***

**When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss  
And pour contempt on all my pride.**

**Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast  
Save in the death of Christ, my God.  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.**

**See, from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?**

**Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a tribute far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

**The Blessing:**

P: 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.**

**Hymn #353 - "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"**

**Praise the one who breaks the darkness  
With a liberating light;  
Praise the one who frees the pris'ners,  
Turning blindness into sight.  
Praise the one who preached the gospel,  
Healing ev'ry dread disease,**

**Calming storms and feeding thousands  
With the Father's word of peace.**

**Praise the one who blessed the children  
With a strong, yet gentle, word;  
Praise the one who drove out demons  
With the piercing, two-edged sword.  
Praise the one who brings cool water  
To the desert's burning sand;  
From this well comes living water,  
Quenching thirst in ev'ry land.**

**Let us praise the Word incarnate,  
Christ, who suffered in our place;  
Jesus died and rose victorious  
That we may know God by grace.  
Let us sing for joy and gladness,  
Seeing what our God has done;  
Let us praise the true Redeemer,  
Praise the one who makes us one.**