

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Devotions delivered by Pastor
Anthony E. Schultz
Good Friday, March 25, 2016**



First Word--Luke 23:26-34

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" And to the hills, "Cover us!" 'For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing!" I read this week about a scrawny little "comedian" named Katt who is forever getting in fights—allegedly! He is 44 years old. My earthly Dad would again say, "Old enough to know better." He is accused of slapping a woman several times—punching her in the ribs—beating her—splitting her tendons—scarring her face and doing other physical and emotional damage. Two weeks before that—he is accused of sucker-punching a man on stage—starting a brawl. He assaulted a tractor driver—hurling rocks and wooden sticks (are there any other kinds of sticks?) at him. He used a bottle to beat up an 18-year-old. He is accused of robbery—a couple of years ago. When the police arrived at the scene of that fight—they found Katt "outside—lying on the ground with his hands behind his back as though he was ready to go to jail." When you lie on the ground—on your face—your hands behind you—I'd say you have a pretty good idea what you did was wrong. Jesus—the first time he spoke from the \dagger said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Are you aware? When I was a Vicar in Waukesha—I went through a car wash. When I came out the other end—I could not believe how the hood of my little red car twinkled in the bright sunshine. Wow! I turned left—out of the car wash lot—and looked up at the traffic light—that is the back of the traffic light! I looked left—I looked right—I looked across the intersection—and there was a black and white—one of Waukesha's finest. He put his lights on—and I put my car in park. "Good afternoon, sir. Didn't you see the arrow—the huge arrow that said—one way—the opposite way?" "I am very sorry," I said—I just got my car washed and I was looking at how shiny my hood is!" "You had better turn around," he said. "You are in the way of traffic!" "Forgive me! Forgive me!"—I said. "Be more careful," he said! Some of my sins are sins of ignorance. I didn't know. I really didn't. Some of my sins are secret sins. Not sneaky secrets because I cover them up. But they are secrets to me. I honestly didn't know! But most of my sins are painful repeats that my Dad would say, "You know better!" Father forgive me—for I know full well—what I do. Forgive me for Jesus' sake.

Second Word--Luke 23:38-43 There was a written notice above him, which read: **"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS"**. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: **"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"** But the other criminal rebuked him. **"Don't you fear God,"** he said, **"since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."** Then he said, **"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."** Jesus answered him, **"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."**

Bart is in Kindergarten at St. Peter's in Appleton. His teacher is Miss Jodi. Bart knows about Heaven. It's where Jesus lives. Going to Heaven is something Bart thinks about all the time. The other day one of Bart's classmates was having a birthday party. The party was being held at Soccer Heaven—Soccer Heaven! Wow! Bart couldn't believe it. On the way to the party he told his mom he felt bad—that he was going to meet Jesus and she wasn't—because she wasn't invited to the party at Soccer Heaven! That's how real Heaven is to Bart!

Today with me in Paradise! Do you think about Heaven? The disciple that Jesus loved was afforded a glimpse into Heaven and wrote, **21 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."** **Revelation 21** Prof. Jeske liked to say, "Can you wrap your head around that?" No more death or mourning or crying or pain. No more death. I woke up Tuesday morning—and Nancy said, "There was another attack—in Brussels—in Belgium—30 some people dead and the number is going up!" Every day there is death. An air plane crashed in Russia—62 people died—the pilots—the people serving soda and pretzels—and the little child who is kicking the seat back in front of him—all the people in 1st class who had a mixed drink while regular people were still boarding—1st class who had moist warm towels for their faces and their grimy hands—all dead! There is death beside the spring highway—little raccoons—a grackle in the grass beside the pile of dead branches behind the retention pond. There is death everywhere. And with that death comes tears—little drops of salt water. When I was little my earthly dad would make a tear—every once in a while—for no obvious reason—a little tear overflowing the eve trough of his lower lid—running down his cheek. Now that I am Grandpa Schultz...I can do that, too. Sometimes during breakfast—sometimes during supper. Sometimes/usually I announce them—"I made a tear!" Not in Heaven. In fact there will be no pain. Can you wrap your head around that? No one ever says, "Ouch!" Today—today would be a good day to die! Maybe today you and I will be with Jesus in paradise!

Third Word--John 19:25-27 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciples whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, **"Dear woman, here is your son,"** and to the disciples, **"Here is your mother."** From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Mary was Jesus' Mom! Can you imagine a more complicated job in the world—Mom to the Son of God! God's Word tells us Jesus had half-brothers—named James, Joseph, Simon and Judas as well as half-sisters. The most common and ordinary Greek word for brothers is the

one used – to mention Jesus’ brothers – James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. Mary was Mom to all of them. Mom to the Son of God. When Jesus was little – would you tell Him to take a nap? Would you tell Him when to go to sleep at night? Would you tell Him – eat your salted dried fish – if you knew it was too salty and too dry. Would you tell Him to eat His barley loaf if you kind of burned it? How do you suppose it went when Jesus was a little person going to school? Do you think the other children picked on Jesus? I remember when I was in college – and we would get an assignment – to write a term paper about some complicated theological truth – or some historical concept – only written about in books that were literally musty, dusty and mildewed. And remember this was before computers – before the Internet – before Google and so! This assignment wasn’t due – for say 6 week. And like over morrow – the day after tomorrow – we had this one guy who would turn in his paper – like this thick – with a homemade lambskin hand sewn cover and illustrations and a 5 page Bibliography. And people thought oh...! Jesus never gave the wrong answer. I’m not saying sinful deeply flawed Rabbis like I am – may have told Jesus he was wrong – but He never was! Jesus loved His earthly Mom Mary. He always respected her. He always kept the 4th commandment. And when He was dying – Jesus looked out for Mary. John should look out for her – and she would look out for John.

Fourth Word--Matthew 27:45-49 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in 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, “He’s calling Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

When you think of terrible sins – what do you think of? Do you think of the 80 year old grandma called the Internet Black Widow – who would become romantically involved with little grandpas then put tranquilizer in their coffee – until they are almost dead? Do you think of people like the Internet Black Widow being wheeled out of prison with her face covered – lest people see her and know what she looks like? The Apostle Paul understood his own guilt before God when he wrote, “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am Chief!**” Martin Luther would say – review the Ten Commandments. Do I fear, love and trust in God above all things – or consider Him the ultimate spoiler – of all my fun? Do I use His name to pray, praise and give thanks – or curse and swear – and then try to excuse it by saying, “I didn’t really mean it!” – which Dr. Becker used to say only makes it worse! Do I love to come to Church? Or will I sit at home and debate which of the Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter services I almost have to go to? Do I honor my Father and Mother which is the first commandment with a promise – or do I volunteer to work on Thanksgiving so I don’t have to spend time with my family? Do I have road rage at the bad drivers in Watertown? Do I commit adultery in my heart day after day? For the trillions of sins committed by the 110 billion people who ever lived in the history of the world – Jesus knew the loneliness of Hell to forgive you and me. Jesus cried out in a loud voice – why have you forsaken me? Jesus knew – because of my sins!

Fifth Word--John 19:28,29 Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to

Jesus' lips. People get thirsty! That's a fact—people get thirsty! If you have ever fed a little baby you know what I mean—they can inhale a bottle of milk. Or take a little toddler—with their sippy cup with water or juice—and they have two handles—and they throw their head back and drink and drink and drink and drink! I still remember being in grade school—Mrs. Neumeister—3rd grade. We ran around the playground—until you were so thirsty! And then we would like up by the bubbler—and you would drink and drink and drink and drink—and she would count like 1 Mississippi—2 Mississippi—3 Mississippi—boom! Next?! Don't make me push you out of the way! Visit in the hospital—and see people who just had surgery. Please—give me the world's most delicious ice chip. Sit beside someone who humanly speaking—is going to meet Jesus soon—and you might find lips where little pieces of skin flake—and in tender love—you take one of those white paper sticks with the little green sponge foam—and dab water on those lips! That's thirst! As Jesus had suffered through the afternoon—to pay for all our sins and mistakes—in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled said, "I thirst!"

Sixth Word—John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Done! Completed! Nothing left unfinished! You hear it said all the time—someone is "extremely organized"! Most people have one in their kitchen—a junk drawer. It is the opposite of extremely organized! The junk drawer—you pull and pull and pull and pull—and it comes open. You have scissors—garbage bag twisties—dead batteries—AA and AAA—keys to cars we don't own—plugs for cell phones—fuse and little plastic lights for Christmas lights—that funny crank thing for when the garbage disposal clogs. There is a marble, a clothes pin, rubber bands, paper clips—and those little black clip things—a couple of very small screw drivers—and one of those plastic anchors you drill into the wall. Organize the junk drawer—the drawer in the bathroom with razors, tooth paste, tooth brush, combs and those little plastic holders with dental floss for flossing. Don't even start on the garage, the basement, the crawl space and the attic above the garage. In a lifetime—when will you be finished organizing all your cooking spices—all your cans of soup in alphabetical order. The good news is—while there is a fine line between being extremely organized and having obsessive compulsive disorder—in the end—it doesn't really matter. What matters is our sins—and the fact that Jesus paid for them all! It is finished. The sacrifice to pay for all our sins is complete—finished—done!

Seventh Word—Luke 23:33-46 When they came to the place called the Skull, there they crucified him, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One." The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And

the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

They are called actuaries—life insurance people who calculate mathematical probabilities. When my earthly father was an insurance man—he would get a printed report each year—about how many people died from different causes. One year I will never forget. The cause of death cherry pit/choked—one! Sometimes it seems everybody dies from cancer. The tumors are here or there—or everywhere. There are people who have ♥ attacks. I can't tell you how many times I got to the farm house or my next door neighbor's house—before the Campbellsport EMS could drive the 6 miles of windy roads through the Kettle Moraine Forest—to find my neighbor on the ground—only to get back up in Heaven. Again and again the phone rings and someone from the Emergency Room says, "Please come quickly. There has been an accident!" Sometimes it is what they call natural causes. Someone gets to be 83—they usually make it to 85. Make 85 and you very often live to 89. Make 89 and it's often 94. Make 94 and you can be like Grandma Jeffers and Grandma Radloff or my Great Aunt Emma. Frieda Knoll 102 years, 8 months 10 days. We get weaker and weaker and weaker—hearts beat slower—breathing becomes shallow. We wake up in Heaven. **Jesus said with a strong voice—Father, into your hands I commend my spirit! When he had said this he breathed his last!**

Thank you, Jesus!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Rev. Anthony P. Schatz". The signature is written in black ink on a light blue rectangular background.

