



**Saint Luke Ev. Lutheran Church—WELS
Watertown, WI
Good Friday, April 2, 2010
Jesus' Seven Words From the Cross**

Stricken, Smitten and Afflicted # 127 v.1-3 CW

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34

It was a long time ago—I was the Vicar at Trinity in Waukesha. We had a little red car with a black vinyl roof. It was filthy—absolutely filthy. I went through a car wash—where you get your front tire into this track—and shift the car into neutral—and it pulls you through. You get sprayed from all sides—then the suds are everywhere—all different kinds of suds. Then these soggy strips of cloth slap all over your car. And then it's the spray again—followed by the blow dryer—blasting the little beads of water off your car and I was out—out into the bright sun. It was amazing! The hood of our little red car in the bright sunshine—was absolutely dazzling! I remember thinking—wow! It's a miracle! I turned left—to the intersection—still looking at my hood! Wow! Then I looked at the traffic lights—and none of them were lights I could see! I looked across—and there were two lanes of cars and trucks—all looking right at me. I thought—I'd better turn right—right away! Look across again—and there right in front of me—was Waukesha's finest. He put his lights on. I put my car in park and started to look for my license and registration! The officer asked me if I had seen the arrow—one way—the other way. I told him I was just through the car wash—and was so excited about my shiny hood—I never saw that great big sign! He had mercy on me. He told me—get turned around and get going—I was blocking traffic! I said, "I'm very sorry!" And I turned around. It was a sin of ignorance. I didn't know. I should have—but I didn't. Some of my sins are sins of ignorance. Most are not! I know the Ten Commandments. It's my job to know the Ten Commandments and the "What does this mean?" part, too! There are fewer and fewer times that I can say, "I didn't know that was wrong!" I also know the fact that ignorance is no excuse! Thanks be to God—that Jesus died to forgive all my sins—including my secret sins—the sins I don't even realize I am doing. Jesus died to forgive us—even when we don't know what we are doing!

Jerusalem the Golden #214 v.1-3 CW

"Today you will be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43

The second time Jesus spoke—it was to one of the thieves dying on a cross on one side of him. Thieves being put to death happens all the time. There is a thief named Franklin—put to death last Tuesday in Texas. Franklin was convicted of committing an unspeakable crime—then stealing two TVs, a VCR and some stereo equipment. When the person Franklin was robbing came home—Franklin chased him and took his life! How tragic is that? Jesus died for Franklin and Jesus died for sinners like you and me. Sinners who don't have their names printed in the newspaper—don't have their mug shot on the evening news—don't commit crimes for which we are sentenced to many years in prison—*without the possibility* of parole. I have said before—this world has trouble punishing people for their crimes. A man named Mr. Anderson was found guilty of a whole bunch of crimes—in the state of Oklahoma—some 16 years ago. He was guilty of unspeakable crimes plus kidnapping, larceny and robbery. His initial sentence was for 2,200 years. Mr. Anderson was not happy with that—so he appealed. Instead of having his sentence reduced—he was sentenced to even more time—including 4,000 years for more unspeakable crimes—plus 1,750 years for kidnapping and 1,000 for burglary. Mr. Anderson will be eligible for parole in almost 13,000 years. As terrible as that sounds—it pales to insignificance—compared to eternity! Think about that! To spend not just thousands but millions and billions of years in hell—and never ever have the possibility of getting out! That would be utter and complete hopelessness! And that is what we face—apart from Jesus' forgiving love. There were two thieves crucified with Jesus—one on his right and one on his left. One was lost forever. One heard the sweetest words ever spoken. **Today you will be with me in Paradise!**

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross #125 v.1-3 CW

“Woman, behold your son. Behold, your mother.” John 19:26,27

When you are sick or suffering or dying – it’s tempting to think about yourself! Somebody bring me a blanket – I’m cold! Fluff my pillow! Bring me something to drink – with one of those bendy straws! Give me the remote! Bring me something to eat! Depending on the pain we want the lights off – or we want the lights on – or maybe just a night light – or a light in the hall. We want it warmer or cooler – open the window – it’s too stuffy – close the window – it’s too drafty. We want the TV louder – or the radio softer. It’s all about us. Jesus is dying – enduring His Heavenly Father’s white hot holy anger against our sins and mistakes – and his thoughts are about everyone else! He is concerned for those who are crucifying him. His concern is for the thief on the cross. His concern is for his Mom and for the disciple he loves. Jesus’ concern is for everyone else – so great and pure and wondrous is his forgiving love! How is your relationship with your mom? How do you get along with the mom of your spouse – who wants you to call her “mom”, too? When you think about your childhood – do you have good memories about growing up – or do you blame your mom for the emotional struggles you have to this day? Good Friday is all about forgiveness. It’s about forgiving from the heart. It’s about forgiving one another – even as Jesus died to forgive us. For Jesus’ sake – love your children – and love your parents!

Amazing Grace – How Sweet the Sound #379 CW

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46

Unspeakable! That’s how God’s Word talks about gross wickedness and sin. The Apostle Paul said – it is a shame to even talk about what the wicked do in secret. Unspeakable! Imagine a child – just 11 years old – taking the life of his father’s girlfriend – and the little unborn baby in her tummy. Imagine the people who do unspeakable things – godless crimes against little children. The mom we heard outside the movie theater – telling the little boy to *shut his face!* The parents with the little toddler – you could hear through the grocery store – screaming – literally screaming down the snack aisle – and up the soda aisle – while workers remark – somebody *could* call the police – and report those people as *a noise nuisance!* Jesus died for the teenagers – who relentlessly teased the new girl in their high school – so terrorized her for four months – to the point that she despaired and self-destructed – because nobody did anything about it. They say – everyone knew it was happening – and nobody did anything about it. And now it’s too late! Jesus died for the Watertown City worker – who drives one of those trucks – that reduce branches to wood chips. The driver – who stopped his truck and picked up garbage can lids – and squished them inside the garbage cans – and put the cans up on the porch of the house – so they wouldn’t roll around in the street! Jesus died for little grandmas who bake oatmeal cookies for little orphans. Jesus died for wretched sinners like us – who sometimes think we are not perfect – but we are certainly better than some of the Pharisees and some of the tax collectors we know! Jesus died for all. Jesus died for me!

A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth #100 v.1,2 CW

“I thirst.” John 19:28

Thirsty? I don’t know lots about thirst. I can still remember being in grade school – after recess – after running around on our playground of grey/white gravel. We would be so thirsty. We would stand in line by the white water cooler – lean our forehead against the cold cinderblock wall and drink and drink and drink and drink – until the teacher would say, “Next.” That was a long time ago. Once you are all grown up – you don’t need anyone’s *permission* to get a drink. You can drink whatever you want – whenever you want – as much as you want. And so most people do. You drink as much milk or as much juice or as much coffee or as much water as you want. You can get *gi-normous* mugs and great big water bottles and fill them over and over again. You can get filtered water with crushed and cubed ice – without even opening the refrigerator door! People – most people – most of the time – aren’t used to being denied anything we want. If we can’t afford it – we can always charge it! Even our government does that – to the tune of trillions of dollars! We indulge our selves. And that doesn’t begin to talk about pain relievers. When something hurts – we want that hurt to go away – right away!

We have pills – all kinds of pills – to make every kind of ache and pain go away. We don't want to be *uncomfortable* – even the medication needs to be pleasant. My last bottle of vitamins now announces the tablets are smaller – easier to swallow – and they are a more pleasant color, too! We have medications that taste like creamy desserts! Children's medications that taste like fruity treats – chewable – liquid centers so they work faster and faster – and bring relief so quickly – you can continue to eat food that is too spicy! In sharp contrast to our self-indulgence – is Jesus' determined forgiving love – that endured all the pain our sins deserved. It was only at the end – in order that the Scriptures would be fulfilled – that Jesus said, **"I thirst!"** Jesus took that small bite of bitter wine vinegar – from a sponge on the stalk – the branch of a shrub called hyssop. Jesus endured painful thirst – in our place – to take away all our guilt!

By Grace I'm Saved #384 v.1,2 CW

"It is finished." John 19:30

Every sin was paid for! Nothing – absolutely nothing was left for us to do! The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, **"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and that not of yourselves – it is a gift of God – not by works so that no man can boast."** By grace – through faith! Faith itself is a gift of God – worked by the Holy Spirit – through the means of grace – the Gospel is Scripture, baptism and Lord's Supper! Faith is a gift! Repentance – being sad and sorry for your sins – is a gift – worked by the Holy Spirit. There are countless things in life – that are unfinished. You can clean your car. I mean wash the outside – with soap and hot water. You can get one of those underbody flushes. You can clean all the little stones out of the treads in your tires. You can wash the windows – vacuum the carpets and the seats. You can put that armor all stuff on all the vinyl and that stuff on your tires – to make them look wet. You can wash the engine – get all the old oil and gunk off of everything – even clean the inside of the hood – so that that is clean. And still there is dirt – in the little cracks. It's the same with your garage. You can hang up all the tools. You can scrub all the oil spots off the floor. You can put that special sealer on the floor. You can scrub all the cobwebs from all the corners. And still there is dirt. There is the basement – under the refrigerator – stained into the carpet. And what about your lawn? The weeds – the twigs – the bugs! We can't make these physical things perfect – I don't care how hard you try – I don't care how obsessive compulsive you might be. It might be better than your neighbors – but it isn't perfect! Only Jesus could clean us on the inside – and he did. He washed us clean with his blood! It is finished! Nothing was left for us to do! It is finished!

God Loved the World So that He Gave #391 v.1,2

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:46

With that Jesus bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Jesus died. His soul went up to Heaven to be with His Heavenly Father. His body was cold, dead, life-less on the cross. This holy week – like every holy week – *Newsweek* magazine has articles about Jesus and eternal life and heaven. If the report is true – it isn't good. It says the number of Americans who believe that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter has dropped 10% in the last 7 years – down to 70%! The number of Americans who think they'll have bodies in heaven is only 26% – and that was a long time ago that they asked that question. Some 80% believe in Heaven – but most of them don't have any idea what it's going to be like! Even people who are famous for having faith in Jesus see Heaven in earthly terms. A very recent – very popular book has a person in heaven eating peppermint ice cream. A famous evangelist talks about driving a yellow Cadillac. One person wants to shell peas and listen to classical music. People talk about playing golf and a billion Muslims think Heaven is hugs and kisses with 72 people who never had hugs and kisses before. How incredibly blasphemously wrong is that? God's Word makes it very clear that in Heaven – **there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain – for the old order of things has passed away.** In Heaven Jesus **will make everything new!** He will wipe every tear from our eyes! Jesus died on Good Friday. On Easter he was alive again. Because he lives – we too shall live – body and soul together again on Judgment Day. Read your Bible. Read God's Word. By the working of the Holy Spirit know and understand and then share with your family and friends and neighbors and co-workers. Jesus died and rose again – and because he lives – we too will live with him in Heaven. Amen!



