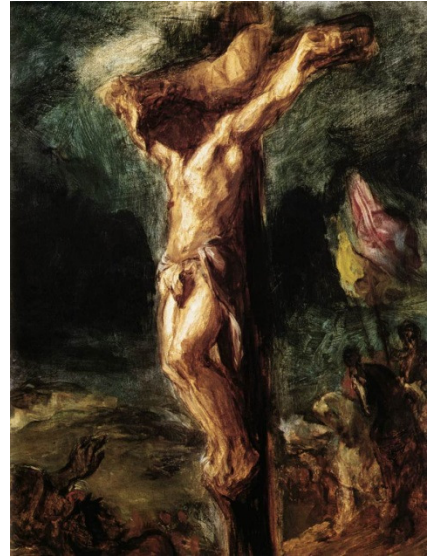


## St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church

Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz  
Christ the King Series C. November 24, 2013

### Luke 23:35-43

<sup>35</sup> The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One." <sup>36</sup> The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." <sup>38</sup> There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. <sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."



People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

An ocean quahog – is a type of deep sea clam. An ocean quahog – was dredged alive from the bottom of the North Atlantic – near Iceland some 7 years ago. They dug it up then put it into a freezer which is apparently--standard operating procedure. It was only recently that it was discovered when they threw this one particular sea clam into the freezer it was alive! They killed it! It's not that I am emotionally attached to a sea clam. It's just that at first they thought this particular clam – Ming the mollusk – named after the Ming dynasty – the Chinese rulers that were alive when Ming was a little mollusk – was the oldest living animal on the planet! Come to find out – after a closer look Ming the mollusk wasn't just 400 years old – he was actually 507 years old. He was actually alive – 7 years after Columbus discovered America. Ming the mollusk was alive before Henry VIII even married his first wife, Catherine of Aragon. 507 years old – and we pitch him into the freezer! It's what we do. We don't stop and think. We take things that are exceedingly precious and treat them as if they were not. We take things that are worthless – and treat them as if they are precious and important. It goes all the way back to Eve and Adam – trading paradise for a bite – a swallow of forbidden fruit. Eve and Adam could have eaten any fruit in the whole wide world – just not the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – and that's the fruit they sample! And that ruined everything! We celebrated Final Judgment – the fact that one day – perhaps very soon – the heavens will be torn open – and Jesus will be here – with all his holy angels – to raise up all the dead – to take us home to heaven. Then last Sunday we celebrated Saints Triumphant – which is what we are – forgiven for Jesus' sake – triumphant over sin and death and the grave. Today is Christ the King – the last Sunday of the Church year.

*Today We Worship Christ Our King!*

*I. Many mock Jesus*

*II. By grace alone we believe in Him and are saved!*

Our Gospel reading today is about Jesus literally on the cross to redeem us – to buy us back. You know how that all came to pass. Holy Week – Palm Sunday Jesus rode into Jerusalem. Little children sang, **“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! Hosanna in the Highest!”** Jesus cleansed the Temple – the same way he did at the start of his public ministry 3 years earlier. He was consumed with passion for the Temple! It was supposed to be a place of prayer and worship to the glory of His Heavenly Father – and they were turning it into a den of robbers and thieves! What horrible blasphemous disrespect was that?! Thursday night Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples. A lamb – or goat – male one year – without blemish or defect was put to death. Blood was painted on the door posts. They had unleavened bread – wine – lamb. Then Jesus took the bread – gave thanks and broke it and gave it to them saying, **“Take and eat – this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.”** Then he took the cup – gave thanks and gave it to them saying, **“Drink from it all of you. This cup is the new testament/new covenant in my blood which is shed for you. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me!”** Out into the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed – sweating drops of blood as it were. So great was his passion and pain. Jesus was tried before Annas – then Caiaphas – before Pontius Pilate – then King Herod – then back to Pilate. Pilate washed his hands proclaiming his innocence in Jesus’ death. The people in the crowd did not hesitate to say, **“His blood be on us and on our children!”** The Roman soldiers took Jesus and two robbers – two thieves to a hill shaped like a skull and there they crucified Him!”

<sup>35</sup> **The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”** You don’t have to look far – to find people still today who mock Jesus. There is a Costco – one of those stores where you buy in bulk – like huge plastic jars of cheese balls – or pretzels – or paper products – bales of paper towel or a year’s supply of just about anything! They had Bibles for sale the other day --\$14.95 said the sticker – with the category – “FICTION!” – stamped on it. The article by the Associated Press said, “Costco apologized for California bible flap” – small “b” for Bible! Oh, it’s not that big a deal – they say. We apologize *if you were offended!* Jesus is the Messiah – the Promised One – the Anointed One – the Christ! You hear His name on TV all the time. People curse and swear all the time. Back in the day – people on TV that were upset or frustrated would start to say God’s name – and then catch them-selves. Today it’s so common – most people don’t think much of it. If you watch football on Sunday afternoon or Monday night or Thursday night – when there is an interception or a fumble or a mistake – chances are very good – they will show the coach – a close-up of their face – and without the sound – it’s pretty obvious the obscenity they scream as they throw their clip board and rip their headphones off – and look for someone – anyone near enough to literally grab hold of! The closer we get to Christmas – the more you will see the celebration of the Savior’s birth used as an excuse for all manner of wickedness and gross sinful excess. How wrong is that?

<sup>36</sup> **The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar <sup>37</sup> and said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”** It is an odd situation – Roman soldiers paid to put another human being to death – in the most exquisitely painful way the mind can conceive. Suffocate him – over a period of hours if not days. It’s not enough to simply play a game of chance for their cloak – then just stand by while they suffer and bleed and gasp and die. They can’t resist mocking him, too. And then – in a moment of pity – offer him some bitter wine – to perhaps ease his burning dehydrated pain – then to mock some more. **“If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.”** Crowned with thorns – there Jesus was – praying and dying for the sins of the soldiers – the sins of the High Priests and elders who literally sneered at him.

Jesus died on the cross for my sins and your mistakes. Jesus suffered to forgive us – and all our friends and relatives and neighbors. Jesus died for you and for me!

**<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” <sup>40</sup> But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? <sup>41</sup> We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.” <sup>42</sup> Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” <sup>43</sup> Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”** Paradise – Heaven itself – I can only imagine! Last Sunday – the First Lesson – Isaiah talked about Heaven! <sup>17</sup> **“See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”** If you have a good memory – chances are there are all kinds of painful things that happened in the near and distant past – that are painful to remember. One of the devil’s best tricks – is to play the DVD in your mind – to hit the play button at the oddest times – to remember something painful, hurtful, sinful and sad. It plays in your mind’s eye again and again. You need to hit the delete button. To erase as best as possible what hurtful harm was done long ago – to forgive and forget by the power of Jesus’ forgiving love. Like so many aspects of our faith – it’s easier said than done – but it’s not impossible. When we get to heaven – what was painful here – will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind – ever again. What made us sad here – will be gone forever and for good! How sweet will that be?

**Today you will be with me in paradise!** Paradise! I wonder what it smells like in Heaven? There are in this world – wonderful smells! Even people who don’t drink coffee like the smell of Highlander Grogg – coffee with caramel and butterscotch and hazelnut. I love the smell of pumpkin pie – the smell of the spices... I love the smell of fresh baked bread. Remember back in the day when everyone baked bread – not the marshmallow stuff they have today? When I was little I knew the smell of Old Spice aftershave and hair spray meant my Mom and Dad were going out. I love the smell of the fresh mowed lawn – the smell of leaves in the forest when you are deer hunting. I love the indescribable smell of little newborn babies. When I was little I liked the smell of communion wine – when people who came back from Lord’s Supper came back by me and would kneel down in the pews and pray. And I knew Jesus loved me – because I could smell that sweet grape smell that was at the same time in a way far past figuring out – Jesus’ blood, too! Heaven will be more wonderful than we can ever imagine.

**Today you will be with me in paradise! Paradise!** November is national – all kinds of something – month. I like that! November is national banana pudding month. I like pudding – especially pearl tapioca. It’s national plantains month – those little things that look like bananas – except you have to cook them first. It’s national peanut butter lovers month. Uncle Terry loves peanut butter and you couldn’t get it in Peru. It’s hard to come by in Haiti – too. We saw a guy that had two lawnmower motors that ran grinders to make home made peanut butter – but he would become physically agitated if you even tried to take a photograph of his peanut butter maker. People are like that – and so? There is something they don’t want you to do – and if you act like you are going to – anyway – they will punch you in the face! What’s with that? One aspect of Paradise that will be really sweet – no one ever hurts anyone. No-one hurts your feelings! A good reminder – for husbands – who love their wife like Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Don’t hurt your wife. Don’t even hurt their feelings. Be very careful about even that!

**Today you will be with me in paradise! Paradise!** In Heaven no one ever dies! A guy named Nicholas died the other day. He did this thing called free diving – without fins – without

supplemental oxygen – he swam straight down – with 15 people watching 5 safety people watching – all kinds of medical help and equipment immediately ready he swam straight down. For 3 minutes and 38 seconds he held his breath. When he finally came back to the surface a whole bunch of things were seriously wrong. And in spite of people doing everything humanly possible – they could not save him! Young and strong and in incredible physical condition – still he died. People do that all the time. If we died today – this day – this hour – do we know where we would be? Pastor Gartner asks the newest class of confirmands every year. And by the grace of God they know they will come home to heaven – because we are saved by grace alone, faith alone, Scripture alone. Jesus can say to each of us – as he said to one of the thieves on a cross, **“Today you will be with me in paradise!”** Even so come quickly Lord Jesus to take us home. Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**

*Rev. Anthony E. Schultz*