

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent

I believe . . .

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild, restless sea,  
Day by day his clear voice soundeth  
Saying, "Christian, follow me."

SBH #553



Fourth Sunday In Lent

*Now when Pilate heard this he was more afraid than ever. He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" John 19:8*

When I was small I thought that "discipleship" was a fishing boat that the disciples sailed around. Obviously I was very young then! That was before I learned that a ship is an ancient symbol for the Church, with Jesus at its helm. A disciple is a follower. But to be effective disciples, we need to know who it is that we follow.

One of the best descriptions of who Jesus is, is Martin Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostles' Creed. Through his witness, we see a clear picture of the Jesus that Luther came to know through Holy Scripture. Not the vindictive judge, seated on the rainbow, ready at the least misdeed to cast the unwary sinner into hell for all eternity, but the Lord of Love whose love took him even to the cross to accomplish our salvation!

Prayer: God of all mercy, by your power to heal and to forgive, graciously cleanse us from all sin and make us strong; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

*(Prayer of the Day for the Fourth Sunday in Lent – LBW #29)*

## Monday

Of the Father's love begotten  
E'er the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending he  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see,  
Evermore and evermore. LBW #42

*He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17*

*I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also true human being, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.*

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Word that was in the beginning with God – eternal and all-mighty. Jesus is the Word that is God – creating and reigning. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega – the beginning and ending of all things: past, present and future, because he holds all things in his hands.

Who is Jesus? Jesus was born as a baby to a young Jewish woman and her fiancé around 6 BCE in the Roman province of Palestine. He grew to manhood and took over his father's business. Jesus became an itinerant preacher and performed many miracles of healing. He also gained the suspicion and hatred of those in power who conspired to have him executed as a rebel and traitor. Then, defying all earthly power and authority, he rose from the dead and ascended back to his place at God's right hand of power. The early Christian church had a very simple creed: Jesus is Lord! And he is!!

Prayer: Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word who became flesh and lived among us. Let the light of our faith shine in all that we do; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

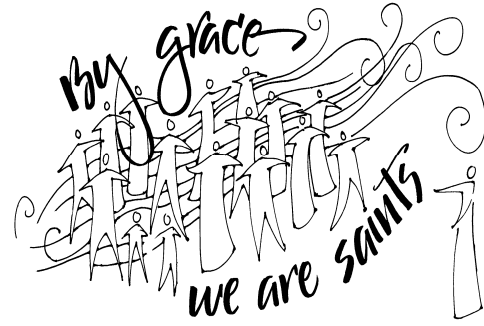
*(Prayer of the*

*Day for the Second Sunday after Christmas – LBW #9)*



## Tuesday

When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in him be found,  
Clothed in his righteousness alone,  
Redeemed to stand before the throne.  
On Christ the solid rock I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand. LBW #294



*He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds. Titus 2:14*

*He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person.*

Who is Jesus? Jesus is my redeemer. The very name Jesus means, "He saves." You may think that "redeem" is something you do with frequent flier miles, but in this case it means something far more vital. Redeem means "to buy back, to ransom, to liberate." And that's what Jesus did for us in his life, death and resurrection. We, by our sin (and all have sinned), stand under a sentence of death. We are lost; condemned. But Jesus took our sentence upon himself! Jesus paid the price that we could not afford – the price of our lives – because he loves us. "God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." John 3:16-17*

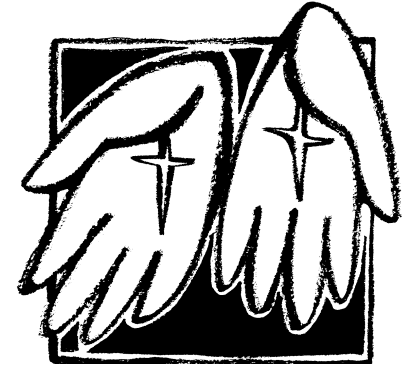
Prayer: What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul,  
What wondrous love is this That caused the Lord of bliss  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,  
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

LBW #385

## Wednesday

Deep were his wounds and red,  
On cruel Calvary,  
As on the Cross he bled  
In bitter agony.  
But they, whom sin has wounded sore  
Find healing in the wounds he bore.

LBW #100



*Since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. Romans 3:23-25a*

*He has purchased and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death*

*"Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Hebrews 9:22.* There's an old hymn that declares, "There's pow'r in the precious blood of the Lamb!" Well, that certainly echoes Martin Luther. In the blood of Jesus there is power to overcome sin and death. There is power in the blood of Jesus to take on the devil on his own turf and vanquish him. There is power in the blood of Jesus to give you and me forgiveness of sins and life in this world, and the promise of eternal life in the world to come. That's power!

Prayer: Glory be to Jesus, who, in bitter pains  
Poured for me the life-blood from his sacred veins  
Grace and life eternal in that blood I find;  
Blest be his compassion, infinitely kind.  
Abel's blood for vengeance pleaded to the skies.  
But the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries.  
Lift we then our voices, swell the mighty flood,  
Louder still and louder, praise the precious blood! LBW #95

## Thursday

Jesus, your blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Mid flaming worlds in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.  
Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;  
For by your cross, absolved I am  
From sin and guilt, from fear and shame.

LBW #302



*After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white with palm branches in their hands. They cried out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!"* Revelation 7:9-10

*He has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness . . .*

The concept of belonging to another and the concept of serving another are foreign to our way of thinking as Americans. But if Christ is our King, that makes us his subjects. In many of his writings, the Apostle Paul describes himself as a "slave of Christ." Paul uses this term to indicate his utter dependence on Christ for everything that makes life worthwhile, and indeed, for life itself! Luther's description of this life in Christ's Kingdom describes what is as well as what is to come when one belongs to Christ. Even now we live as his subjects, but the promise stands firm that this relationship is not terminated by our death. This relationship with our Lord and Savior is as eternal as he is. This relationship begins in time and continues for eternity, and the covenant is sealed, not with the blood of animals, but with the Blood of the Lamb of God.

Prayer: When from the dust of death I rise  
To claim my mansion in the skies,  
This then shall be my only plea:  
Christ Jesus lived and died for me. LBW #302

## Friday

Jesus lives! The vict'ry's won!  
Death no longer can appall me;  
Jesus lives! Death's reign is done!  
From the grave will Christ recall me.  
Brighter scenes will then commence;  
This shall be my confidence.

LBW #133

*If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, then we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact **Christ has been raised from the dead**, the first fruits of those who have died.*

1 Corinthians 15:17-20

*. . . just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules in eternity.*

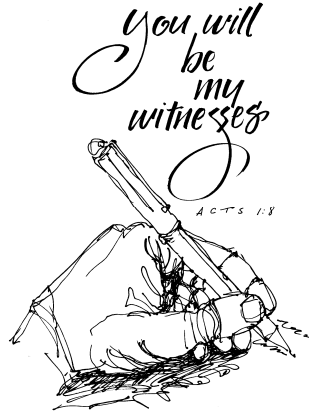
It is still Lent, but we know how the story ends. In fact, we stake our lives on the way we know the story ends. Even as we walk through this season of Lent and recall the sufferings and death of Jesus, we live on this side of the Cross! We know that even though the weeping disciples laid the body of Jesus in the tomb, on the third day he will have vanquished death and the grave and will appear to them to turn their weeping into shouts of joy. We can claim with confidence that Jesus is indeed "*risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity.*"

Prayer: His kingdom cannot fail, he rules o'er earth and heav'n;  
The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus giv'n:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
He sits at God's right hand till all his foes submit,  
And bow to his command, and fall beneath his feet:  
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!  
LBW #171



## Saturday

I love to tell the story  
Of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and his glory,  
Of Jesus and his love;  
I love to tell the story,  
Because I know 'tis true;  
It satisfies my longings  
As nothing else would do. SBH #326



*Jesus said to [Thomas], "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

*John 14:6*

*This is most certainly true.*

This is the ringing affirmation that closes Luther's explanation of each article of the Apostles' Creed. It is his echo of the first part of each explanation, "*I believe.*" The word "creed" comes from the Latin "*credo*" which means "I believe." If you hang them together, Luther is stating "I believe that this is most certainly true!" It is a strong statement, but it is one on which Luther could and did stake his life, and we can do the same. This is the faith that invites and compels us to witness to what Jesus has done in our lives. This is the faith that says that following Jesus can and does make a difference! This is the faith that can turn lives around, and lift the fallen. This is the faith that even when things seem most hopeless, gives hope! This is most certainly true!

Prayer: You are the truth; your Word alone true wisdom can impart;  
You only can inform the mind and purify the heart.  
You are the way, the truth, the life;  
Grant us that way to know, that truth to keep, that life to win  
Whose joys eternal flow.

LBW #464