

“And free My children from their dread
 Of guilt and condemnation.
 The wrath and stripes are hard to bear,
 But by Your passion they will share
 The fruit of Your salvation.”

3 “Yes, Father, yes, most willingly
 I’ll bear what You command Me.
 My will conforms to Your decree,
 I’ll do what You have asked Me.”
 O wondrous Love, what have You done!
 The Father offers up His Son,
 Desiring our salvation.
 O Love, how strong You are to save!
 You lay the One into the grave
 Who built the earth’s foundation.

4 Lord, when Your glory I shall see
 And taste Your kingdom’s pleasure,
 Your blood my royal robe shall be,
 My joy beyond all measure!
 When I appear before Your throne,
 Your righteousness shall be my crown;
 With these I need not hide me.
 And there, in garments richly wrought,
 As Your own bride shall we be brought
 To stand in joy beside You.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76; tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.
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The Congregation at Prayer

The Whole Story

2025
 A Daily Devotional
 St. Paul LCMS, Ida Grove, IA



Week #16-The Whole Story

Holy Week

April 13-April 20, 2025

Start Every Day

“In the Name of the Father, and + of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen”

recite **APOSTLE’S CREED**

Read **Catechism—The Eighth Commandment**

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

VERSE: Acts 2:38 ***“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”***

PRAYER of the WORD

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 13

- Read **Psalm 103** (Bless YHWH, O my soul)
- Read ***The Gospels: John 7-8***

GREGORY THE GREAT: (John 8:58) Our Redeemer graciously turns their gaze away from his body and draws it to contemplation of his divinity. He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” “Before” indicates past time, “I am” present time. Because divinity does not have past and future time but always is, he did not say, “I was before Abraham” but “Before Abraham was, I am.” And so it was said to Moses, “I am who I am,” and “You will say to the children of Israel, ‘He who is

Mid-Day Prayer (9am-3pm)

Gracious Jesus, our Lord and our God, at this hour you bore our sins in Your own body on the tree that we being dead to sin, might live unto righteousness. Have mercy upon us, Your servants, with all others who devoutly remember Your blessed passion, a holy and peaceful life in this world and through Your grace eternal glory in the life to come. Amen.

Luther’s Evening Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

438 A LAMB GOES UNCOMPLAINING FORTH

- 1 A Lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
The guilt of sinners bearing
And, laden with the sins of earth,
None else the burden sharing;
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint,
That spotless life to offer,
He bears the stripes, the wounds, the lies,
The mockery, and yet replies,
“All this I gladly suffer.”
- 2 This Lamb is Christ, the soul’s great friend,
The Lamb of God, our Savior,
Whom God the Father chose to send
To gain for us His favor.
“Go forth, My Son,” the Father said,

did so because he loved us. COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 12.⁷

Sunday, April 13 (Easter Sunday)

- Read **The Gospels: John 20-21**

End Every Day

Pray the *Collect for Good Friday*

Almighty God, graciously behold this Your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed and delivered into the hands of sinful men to suffer death upon the cross; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Personal Prayers

pray **LORD'S PRAYER**

Luther's Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

⁷ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2007. [John 11–21](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

has sent me to you.' " Therefore he who could draw near by manifesting his presence and depart after completing his life existed both before and after Abraham. Truth always exists, because nothing begins before it in time or comes to an end after it. FORTY GOSPEL HOMILIES 16.¹

Monday, April 14

- Read **Psalm 104** (Bless YHWH, O my soul! O YHWH my God, you are very great!)
- Read ***The Gospels: John 9-10***

AUGUSTINE: (John 10:7) Our Lord just said now that he was a shepherd. He also said he was a gate.... He is the gate in the head and the shepherd in the body. You see, he says to Peter, whom he singles out to represent his [body the] church, "Peter, do you love me?" ... as though to say, What will you give me, what proof will you provide me with that you love me?... If you love me, feed my sheep; enter in by the Door and do not go up another way.... Who is the one who enters by the door? The one who enters by Christ. And who is that? The one who imitates Christ's passion, who understands Christ's humility, understands that while God has become man for us, he himself as a human being is not God, just a man [person]. I mean to say, anyone who wishes to play God while he is just a

¹ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2006. [John 1–10](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

man is not imitating the one who, while he was God, became a man. SERMON 137.3–4.²

Tuesday, April 15

- Read **Psalm 105** (O give thanks to YHWH; call upon his name)
- Read ***The Gospels: John 11-12***

PETER CHRYSOLOGUS: (John 11:31) Mary weeps, the Jews weep, and Christ also weeps: do you think [all wept] with a similar emotion? So be it that Mary the sister wept since she was unable to hold on to her brother and was unable to prevent his death. Although she was certain about the resurrection, nevertheless, because she was without comfort at the moment, because its delay meant that his absence would be lengthy and because she was sad about his being separated from God, she could not but weep. At the same time since when death appears it is so grim, so morbid, so very cruel, it could not but unsettle and disturb any mind, no matter how full of faith....

The Jews were in tears, being both mindful of their condition and overcome by despair concerning the future life.... As often as one sees a dead person, that often does he lament that he is destined to die. So a mortal cannot but grieve concerning death.

² Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2006. [John 1–10](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

beyond our understanding, the power of God brought from Christ's passion an end far different from that intended by his enemies. His sufferings served as a snare for death and rendered it powerless. The Lord's death proved to be our restoration to immortality and newness of life. Condemned to death though innocent, he went forward bearing on his shoulders the cross on which he was to suffer. He did this for our sake, taking on himself the punishment that the law justly imposed on sinners. He was cursed for our sake according to the saying of Scripture: "A curse is on everyone who is hanged on a tree." ... We who have all committed many sins were under that ancient curse for our refusal to obey the law of God. To set us free he who was without sin took that curse on himself. Since he is God who is above all, his sufferings sufficed for all, his death in the flesh was the redemption of all. And so, Christ carried the cross, a cross that was rightfully not his but ours, who were under the condemnation of the law.... Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ has warned us that anyone who does not take up his cross and follow him is not worthy of him. And I think taking up the cross means simply renouncing the world for God's sake and, if this is required of us, putting the hope of future blessings before the life we now live in the body. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not ashamed to carry the cross we deserved, and he

Son of God. What is the earth? Our flesh. Inquire where Christ was born, and you will see that “truth has sprung up from the earth.” Yet this Truth that has sprung up from the earth existed before the earth, for heaven and earth were made through him. But in order that righteousness might look down from heaven, that is, that human beings might be made righteous through divine grace, Truth was born from the Virgin Mary, that he might be in a position to offer sacrifice for those who needed justification, the sacrifice of his passion, the sacrifice of the cross. How could he offer his sacrifice for our sins, except by dying? But how could he die, unless he took from us what could die? Had he not taken mortal flesh from us, Christ could not have died, for the Word does not die, the Godhead does not die, the Power and Wisdom of God does not die. How could he offer himself as a saving victim, if he did not die? But how could he die without clothing himself in flesh? And how could he put on flesh unless Truth sprang up from the earth? EXPLANATION OF PSALM 84.13.⁶

Saturday, April 12 (Holy Saturday)

- Read **The Gospels: John 19**

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: (John 19:17) They led away the author of life to die—to die for our sake. In a way

⁶ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2007. [John 11–21](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

For which of these reasons was Christ weeping? And if for none of them, then why was he in tears? Certainly he is the same one who had said, “Lazarus is dead, and I rejoice.” ... When he loses him he sheds no tears, but when he lifts him up it is then that he weeps. He pours out mortal tears just at the time when he is pouring back in the spirit of life. Brothers, the nature of our human body has this tendency, that the force of joy and the force of sorrow both produce tears.... This is why Christ wept, not from grief in the face of death but from calling to mind that happiness when by his own voice, and solely by his voice, he would raise up all the dead to eternal life. SERMON 64.3.³

Wednesday, April 16

- Read **Psalm 106** (Praise YHWH! Oh give thanks to YHWH for he is good)
- Read **The Gospels: John 13-14**

CHRYSOSTOM: (John 13:12) And yet it is not the same thing, for he is Lord and Master, but you are fellow servants one of another. What does “as” mean then [when he says, “If I *as* your Lord and Master do this]? It means we should do it “with the same zeal.” For on this account he takes instances from greater actions that we may, if so be it, perform the lesser actions. Thus schoolmasters

³ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2007. [John 11–21](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

write the letters for children very beautifully, that they may come to imitate them, though in an inferior manner. Where now are they who spit on their fellow servants? Where now they who demand honors? Christ washed the feet of the traitor, the sacrilegious, the thief—and he did this close to the time of the betrayal—and incurable as [Judas] was, made him a partaker of his table. And are you high minded, and do you raise your eyebrows? “Let us then wash one another’s feet.” But then someone says, “Then we must wash those of our domestics.” And what a great thing it is if we do wash even those of our domestics! In our case “slave” and “free” is a difference of words. But there it is an actual reality. For by nature he was Lord and we were the servants, yet even this he did not refuse to do at that time. But now it is considered praiseworthy if we do not treat free people as bondmen, as slaves bought with money. And what shall we say in that day, if after receiving proofs of such forbearance, we ourselves do not imitate them at all but do the exact opposite and, acting in diametrical opposition to Jesus’ words, remain prideful and do not discharge the debt? For God has made us debtors one to another, having first done so himself, and has made us debtors of a lesser amount. For he was our Lord, and he did this. But we do it, if we do it at all, to our fellow servants, a thing that he himself implied by saying, “If I then your Lord and Master do this, so should you.” Indeed it would have naturally followed to

say, “How much more should you servants,” but he left this to the conscience of the hearers. HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 71.1.⁴

Thursday, April 17 (Maundy Thursday)

- Read **The Gospels: John 15-16**

AMBROSE: (John 15:1) Jacob spoke of [our Lord as] a grape, because Christ hung on the wood like a grape. He is the vine; he is the grape. He is the vine because he cleaves to the wood and the grape because, when his side was opened by the soldier’s lance, he sent forth water and blood³ ... water for baptism, blood for redemption. The water washed us; the blood redeemed us. ON THE PATRIARCHS 4.24.⁵

Friday, April 18 (Good Friday)

- Read **The Gospels: John 17-18**

AUGUSTINE: (John 18:37) “Truth has sprung up from the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven.” Yes, “truth has sprung up from the earth” because Christ was born from a woman. “Truth has sprung up from the earth” because the Son of God has come forth from the flesh. What is Truth? The

⁴ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2007. [John 11–21](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

⁵ Elowsky, Joel C., ed. 2007. [John 11–21](#). Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.