**Lent Vespers 2,**

20 March 2022,

*Concordia Lutheran Mission,*

Terrebonne, Oregon.

**“The Cross is God’s Hour of Glory.”**

These words spake Jesus and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.

**St. John 17:1.**

**Introduction**.

Jesus here speaks of His approaching death on the Cross. What glory, however, is there in the death of the Cross? For mortals there is no glory, only shame. The death of the cross is one of the most ignoble and shameful of deaths.[[1]](#footnote-1)1 Yet God glories in it. How so? *God glories in the Cross of Christ because the Cross is God’s Mercy toward sinners in order to save them from sin and give life everlasting*.

*On the Cross God Himself suffered the ignominy and shame of the guilt of sin and the consequences of the sins of men.*  Instead of men bearing this awful, dreadful, and everlasting burden, God Himself bore it for them to deliver men from the dreadful consequences of sin. This Gracious Work is God’s Renown or Glory. *God is renowned for Mercy through the Cross of Christ*[[2]](#footnote-2)2 *wherein God suffered man’s shame and punishment for sin*.

The Cross is God’s Glory because the Cross is God’s Mercy toward sinners to save and give life everlasting.

**I. The Cross of Christ is God’s Glory because the Cross is God’s Mercy toward Sinners.**

**A. The Cross is God’s curse for those who don’t keep His commandments.**

For mortals, the cross certainly is not glorious. Rather, it is the ignominious and shameful end of the line and the beginning of eternal torment and shame. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed *is* everyone that hangeth on a tree ... .[[3]](#footnote-3)3

This shame and suffering never ends but goes on forever. The Prophet Isaiah writes:

And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.[[4]](#footnote-4)4

**B. God’s Glory is the Cross of Christ.**

Everlasting shame and punishment. Who could bear it? It is a horrible burden. Of this burden and the magnitude and breadth of its terrible shame and punishment Christ speaks:

Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying,*  have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard *it*, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes. Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

*Jesus ties God’s Glory directly to the Cross*. Christ says He was sent for this Purpose. On the Cross Christ Atoned for the sins of all men, suffering the shame and punishment brought on by bearing the guilt of all men.

This Blessed Work cost God a great deal. Jesus says His Soul is troubled. In other words, the Soul of the Almighty is troubled. A great tribulation is the Cross because it troubles the Soul of the Almighty.[[6]](#footnote-6)6 Christ was troubled because of the unbounded pain He endured because He bore God’s infinite and eternal wrath for our sins and the sins of all men. The Prophet Isaiah writes:

Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, he *was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed*.* He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, ye he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.[[7]](#footnote-7)7

Jesus suffered not only the great pain of the guilt of our sins but also the horrible and boundless shame. David records Jesus’ words in **Psalm 69**:

O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have borne reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.[[8]](#footnote-8)8

Remarkably, in the midst of the depths of His profound suffering, Jesus thinks not of Himself but of us. He prays that we will not be offended by His scarred and marred visage we caused. We defaced Jesus’ countenance and caused Him pain and discomfort by our sins[[9]](#footnote-9)9 yet He prays we not be offended by His disfigurement caused by our sins. Jesus does so in order that we not abandon our Savior because of the wounds of the Christ and perish. The Prophet Isaiah writes of Christ’s disfigurement and shame caused by our sins:

As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.1[[10]](#footnote-10)0

Christ’s prayer for us in the midst of His Passion secured us in faith and prevents us from abandoning Christ because of the scandal of the Cross.

Because the Cross of Christ is God’s Mercy to saves sinners, the Cross of Christ is God’s Hour of Glory.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

**II. The Gospel is God’s Glory because it Elevates the Cross of Christ to Save and Give Life Everlasting.**

**A. The Gospel is God’s Glory because it elevates the Cross of Christ**.

God’s Glory of the Cross is elevated by the Gospel of Christ. The Apostle St. John writes:

Jesus answered and said, ... Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.1[[12]](#footnote-12)2

Likewise, the Apostle St. Paul writes that the Gospel elevates the Cross of Christ:

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3

The Gospel is God’s Glory because it elevates His Mercy in the Cross of Christ.

**B. The Gospel is God’s Glory because it gives salvation and life everlasting through the Cross of Christ**.

Because the Gospel elevates God’s Mercy in Christ, it saves sinners and gives life everlasting. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection ... .1[[14]](#footnote-14)4

**Conclusion.**

The Cross of Christ is God’s Hour of Glory. The Cross of Christ is God’s Glory because it is God’s Mercy toward sinners to forgive, save, and give life eternal.

The Gospel is God’s Glory because it elevates the Cross of Christ. Through the Gospel men gain the blessings of God’s Glory, namely, forgiveness, salvation, life everlasting, and the resurrection of the body on the Last Day when Christ returns again in glory.

**Amen.**

1. 1“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree ... .” **Galatians 3:13**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2“**And I will set a sign** [the Gospel] **among them**, **and I will send those that escape** [fugitives, namely, those Christians in the early days of the Church who escaped persecution brought on by the preaching of the Gospel] **of them unto the nations**, **to Tarshish**, **Pul**, **and Lud**, **that draw the bow**, ***to* Tubal and Javan**, ***to* the isles afar off**, **that have not heard my fame**, **neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles**.” **Isaiah 66:19**, emphasis and amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3**Galatians 3:13**. The Apostle St. Paul draws this from the Law of Moses. “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which thy LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.” **Deuteronomy 21:21-22**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4**Isaiah 65:24**. “With that word ‘flesh’ the evangelist wanted to indicate this inexpressible humiliation. Isaiah says (53:10): ‘When You make His soul,’ that is, His life, ‘an offering for sin, He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days.’ And St. Paul writes to the Galatians (3:13): ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.’” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 22, p. 111. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5**St. John 12:27-33**. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6Normally, great tribulation refers to the New Testament era. The tribulation is great because of the breadth and depth of the opposition as the Gospel spreads throughout the world. The Source of this great tribulation was the Tribulation of the Soul of the Almighty because He bore the sin of the world. “With the word, ‘In the world you have tribulation’ the Lord includes the whole time of the New Testament, but in faith and in spirit they will see Christ and rejoice in Him, recognizing the Father, but this will not exempt them from the cross and trials, but in the midst of these tribulations they have peace in Christ, who has overcome the world for them.” *Wisdom for Today, Volumes II & III, The Biblical History of the New Testament and True and False Statements Covering the Four Gospels*, tr. the Rev. Arthur E. Beck, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, no date, p. 265. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7**Isaiah 53:3-7**. “This is the foremost passage [**Isaiah 52**, **53**] on the suffering and resurrection of Christ, and there is hardly another like it. Therefore we must memorize this passage, for it certainly drives out the stubbornness of the Jews. The Jews cannot deny that this passage speaks of Christ. They indeed grant the glories of Christ in this chapter but they are unwilling to grant His cross and suffering. Yet this is what the text says: This King will be glorious, but after His death. This indicates that this King is different from an ordinary one, since He will begin His reign after death.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 17, p. 215, amplification in brackets added. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8**Psalm 69:5-8**. “Des Messias Gebet in seinem Leiden.” (The Messiah’s Prayer in His Suffering.) *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift Alten und Neuen Testaments, nach der deutschen Uebersetzung Dr. Martin Luthers* (*The Bible or the Entire Holy Scripture, Old and New Testaments, according to the German Translation of Dr. Martin Luther*), St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1905, p. 588.

   “The psalm speaks literally about the suffering of the Lord in His own person.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 10, p. 351.

   “But we ask: who is it that is speaking, sighing, and praying in Ps. 40 and 69? It is not David, nor for that matter any other pious servant of God, but is Christ, the Son of David. Ps. 40, 7: ‘Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me’ puts it beyond shadow of a doubt that the Messiah is speaking all the words of Ps. 40. The Messiah is He who is coming. What is written in the book, in Scriptures concerns and refers to the Messiah alone. See Heb. 10, 7. And the words contained in Ps. 69, 9: ‘For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me’, which in the New Testament, in John 2, 17 and Rom. 15,3 are referred explicitly to Christ, attest that Christ is the Subject of Ps. 69.” The Rev. Dr. George Stoeckhardt, *Christ in Old Testament Prophecy*, tr. the Rev. Erwin W. Koehlinger, Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, p. 11.

   “We cannot comprehend this anguish of Christ, for it is with us just as it was with the apostles, who slept and slumbered through it all. ... One has various types from the saints in the Old Testament on practically every aspect of Christ’s sufferings. But, regarding this inner (spiritual agony) and pain, one actually has no type. One would like to point to the fact that Jonah says that while in the belly of the ‘whale-fish’ ... he cried out from the belly of hell, thinking that he was forsaken before the eyes of God, [and] that his soul despaired within him, Jonah 2. David, also, sometimes complained about the anguish in his heart; however, it is all to be regarded as nothing compared to the spiritual sufferings of Christ; as insignificant as a tiny drop compared to a huge ocean.” The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, tr. Elmer M. Hohle, ed. David O. Berger, Malone, TX: Reprstination Press, 1999, p. 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9“He was crucified for the sake of all our sins, Isa. 53; and with our sins we caused Him pain and effort, Isa. 43.” *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the four evangelists, presented so that we may be awakened in the knowledge of the love of Christ and may blessedly grow according to the inner man*, tr. Elmer M. Hohle, ed. David O. Berger, Malone, TX: Repristination Press, pp. 243, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10**Isaiah 52:14**. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11“According to Scripture, Christ’s death reveals both God’s love and God’s wrath. This truth is brought out in this very passage, Rom. 5:8-11: ‘Hated by God (... lying under God’s wrath), we were reconciled to God.’ Love prompts God to reconcile us to Himself by the death of His Son, that is, to render satisfaction ti His punitive justice. Scripture teaches that God’s compassionate will or love does not preclude the settlement with the righteousness of God, but includes it.” The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, pp. 352, 353. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12**St. John 12:30**, **31-33**. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13**II Corinthians 11:26**. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14**Romans 6:3-4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)