**Vespers IV,**

 **29 March 2020,**

 **The Fourth Sunday in Lent,**

 ***Concordia Lutheran Mission,***

**Terrebonne, Oregon**.

**“The Lord Recreates the World**

**through the Passion of Christ**.”

The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

This is the LORD’s doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes. This is the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Psalm 118:22-24**.

 The day that the Lord has made through the Gospel is the life everlasting of God’s Recreation of the world through the Passion of Christ.

 The day man had made was the fall into sin through which he and the entire world would perish were it not for God’s Gracious intervention in Christ. God Recreates the fallen world through the Passion of Christ. The Passion of Christ is able to Recreate world because the Cross Atones for sin, the cause of the man’s demise and the world with it.

 This Miraculous Work is marvelous in the eyes of believers for God Himself gives Himself for them and also, thereby, brings forth a new creation that lasts forever.

 Through the Passion of Christ the Lord Recreates the world unto bliss and life everlasting better than new forever.

**I. The Lord Recreates World through the Passion of Christ.**

**A. Man made the day of curse, misery, and death, through his sin.**

The day the Lord makes is wonderful. What is the day like that man has created? The day man has created is the fall into sin, curse, misery, and death. Moses writes:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.[[1]](#footnote-1)1

 This day is the magnificent day that Adam created through the false doctrine of the devil and sin. Adam created sin, curse, misery, and finally death for himself and for all his children. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ... .[[2]](#footnote-2)2

 The works of man outside of God’s Word makes a day of sin, curse, misery, and death.

**B. The Passion of Christ Recreates the world Better than New through the Atonement of Sin.**

Unlike men the Lord creates a day marvelous even though He has to deal with a world fallen in sin. The psalmist writes:

The stone *which* the builders refused is become the head *stone* of the corner.

This is the LORD’s doing; it *is* marvelous in our eyes. This is the day *which* the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.[[3]](#footnote-3)3

 From the dust and ashes of sin the Lord, in His ineffable Mercy and Grace toward fallen men, God Recreates from the rubbles of sin everlasting blessings for fallen men. This Recreation comes through the Stone that was rejected, namely, Jesus Christ and Him Crucified for the sins of men. Luther writes of this Cornerstone , namely, Christ:

*Rejected by men but in God’s sight chosen and precious*. Here the Apostle [St. Peter] quotes a statement made by the prophet David in Ps. 118:22-23: “The Stone which the builders rejected has become the chief Cornerstone. ... It is marvelous in our eyes.” Christ, too, cites this statement in Matt. 21:42. Likewise Peter in Acts 4:1, where he says: “This is the Stone which was rejected by you builders.” You are builders, he says. For they taught the people, delivered long sermons, and issued many laws; but they produced only work-righteous people and hypocrites. So Christ comes along and say (Matt. 23:33): “You are hypocrites and a brood of vipers!” He passes many terrible judgments on them and associates with the sinners, not with the great saints. This they cannot bear. They even reject Him and say: “You are a heretic! Do you forbid people to perform good works? Ah, you must die!” This is why Peter says here: This is the Cornerstone which is rejected in this way by men -- the Cornerstone on which you must be built through faith.[[4]](#footnote-4)4 This is now marvelous in our eyes, as the prophet declares (Ps. 118:22). It seems strange to us, and if the Spirit does not teach it, one nowise understands it. Therefore Peter says that this Stone is chosen and precious in God’s sight, that it is a select, precious Stone powerful enough to remove death, pay for sin, rescue from hell, and in addition, to give the kingdom of heaven.[[5]](#footnote-5)5

Christ was rejected not because He was not helping men but because He was helping men through the forgiveness of their sins, which forgiveness offended those who sought to justify themselves by their own works. The Apostle St. Paul writes that Christ came to Atone for the sins of men:

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according the scriptures ... .[[6]](#footnote-6)6

 Because sin is what reduced man and the world to ashes and dust forever[[7]](#footnote-7)7, the Atonement of sin Recreates the fallen world, and Recreates it better than new. The Apostle St. John writes of Christ’s Blessed Work to Recreate the world through the Remission of sins:

And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make al things new ... .[[8]](#footnote-8)8

The prophet Isaiah writes:

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth:[[9]](#footnote-9)9 and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever *in that* which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.1[[10]](#footnote-10)0

 This creation shall even be better than new. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.1[[11]](#footnote-11)1

**II. The Marvelous Eyes of Faith through the Gospel Behold and Receive the Recreation by Christ’s Passion.**

**A. The Gospel creates the Marvelous Eyes of Faith.**

 But who would know of this Marvelous Work of the Lord through the Passion of Christ except through the Gospel? The Lutheran Church confesses that this Wonderful Knowledge of the Lord comes only through God’s Gospel:

For neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe on Him, and obtain Him for our Lord, unless it were offered to us and granted to our hearts by the Holy Ghost through the preaching of the gospel. The work is done and accomplished; for Christ has acquired and gained the treasure for us by His suffering, death, and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained concealed so that no one knew of it, then it would be in vain and lost. That this treasure, therefore, might not lie buried, but be appropriated and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to go forth and be proclaimed, in which He gives the Holy Ghost to bring this treasure home and appropriate it to us. Therefore sanctifying is nothing else than bringing us to Christ to receive this good, to which we could not attain of ourselves.1[[12]](#footnote-12)2

 Thus through the Gospel the eyes of faith are created which are able to behold the Marvels of Christ’s Passion to Recreate the world. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.1[[13]](#footnote-13)3

**B. Faith receives God’s Recreation of the world through the Passion of Christ.**

The Lord’s Recreation of the world through the Gospel of the Passion is a Marvel. The Apostle St. Peter writes that even the angels marvel at the Passion of Christ even though it’s not for them but because it’s an absolute beauty and for the benefit of their brethren in the Image of God1[[14]](#footnote-14)4, men on earth. The Apostle St. Peter writes:

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minster the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.1[[15]](#footnote-15)5

Finally, the Gospel of the Passion of Christ creates Marvelous Eyes of Faith because the Passion of Christ Recreating the world is as great a work or even greater than God creating all things in the beginning. The Rev. Dr. Francis Pieper writes:

Faith is not the product of human deliberation, self-decision, or concurrence, etc., but as much a creative work of God as the calling forth of light out of darkness at Creation (2 Cor. 4:6).1[[16]](#footnote-16)6

 Because faith sees and receives the Marvel of God’s Recreation of the world through the Passion of Christ, life everlasting begins now by the Gospel through faith. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.1[[17]](#footnote-17)7

By Holy Baptism through faith we are now in Christ and, therefore, a new creature. The Apostle St. Paul writes:

Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.1[[18]](#footnote-18)8

The Lutheran Church confesses:

And while we are cheered in the midst of the terrors and receive consolation, other spiritual movements at the same time grow, the knowledge of God, fear of God, hope, love of God; and we are *regenerated*, as Paul says, Col. 3, 10, and 2 Cor. 3, 18, *in the knowledge of God, and beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, i.e.*, we receive the true knowledge of God, so that we truly fear Him, truly trust that we are cared for, and that we are heard by Him. This regeneration is, as it were, the beginning of eternal life ... .1[[19]](#footnote-19)9

**Conclusion**.

 The day man created through his sin is the day of sin, curse, misery, weeping, and death. The Lord, however, in His ineffable Mercy and Grace toward fallen men, raises men from the ashes and death of men to a new world. This the Lord does through the Passion of Christ. The Passion of Christ Atones for the sins of men and, thereby, removes that which caused the world to perish and Recreates a new world.

 This world Recreated comes to men through the Gospel wherein God makes them new creatures2[[20]](#footnote-20)0 unto life everlasting and the resurrection of the body.

 ***Amen.***

1. 1**Genesis 3:17 -19**. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2**Romans 5:12**. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3**Psalm 118:22-24**. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 4“He [Christ] is called ‘Cornerstone’ (Ps. 118:22; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:7): ... *Because He supports the spiritual edifice* ... .” The Rev. Dr. John Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces ... On the Person and Office of Christ*, tr. Richard J. Dinda, edited with annotations by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date, p. 28, amplification in brackets added.

 Luther writes that the requirement to believe in Christ the Cornerstone also proves, again, Christ’s Deity: “But the words follow -- ‘He who believes in Him will not be put to shame’ -- show that the prophet is not speaking of a physical stone. If I am to believe in Him, this must be a spiritual Stone; for how can I believe in stone and wood? Furthermore, He must be true God, since in the First Commandment God has forbidden belief in anything but Hm alone. Because the Stone is laid as the foundation on which we should trust, this must be God Himself. On the other hand, He cannot be God alone but must ast the same time be man, because He must be part of the building, and not only a part but also the Head. Now when one constructs a building, one stone must be like the other, so that every stone has the character, nature, and form of the other. Therefore since we are built on Christ, He must be like us and of the very same nature as the other stones that rest on Him, namely, a true man as we all are. Thus Scripture expresses such great things which simple and plain words, namely, the sum and substance of our faith. In such brief statements it includes more than any many can express.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 30, p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 5Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 51, 52. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. 6**I Corinthians 15:3-4**. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. 7“And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes ... .” **Genesis 18:27**. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return.” **Genesis 3:19**. Hence, we read in **The Order for the Burial of the Dead**, “FORASMUCH as it hath pleased Almighty God, in His wise providence, to take out of this world the soul of our departed *brother*, we therefore commit his body to the ground (to God’s acre); earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” *The Lutheran Agenda*, p. 95, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. 8**Revelation 21:5**. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. 9“Only a new man can sing *a new song*. But the new man is a man of grace, a spiritual and inner man before God. The old man, however, is the man of sin, the carnal and outer man before the world. The newness is grace, the oldness, sin. Therefore the devil is called the ‘old serpent’ (Rev. 12:9), and Christ ‘a new thing which the Lord created on the earth’ (Jer. 31:22), through whom God the Father made all things new, according to Rev. 21:5. It is clear, then, that this ‘new song’ is so called not because of time, but because of the new holy thing, for Scripture is holy, and it speaks of the holy. Thus also the harp is holy and the psaltery is holy.” Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works*, Vol. 10, 154, underscore added.

 “The angel says not among [unmarried] maidens but ‘among women’ because of that first promise of Gen. 3:15 that the woman’s seed would bruise the serpent’s head, and Jer. 31:{22}: ‘The woman will encompass a man.’ For that very reason Paul says, Gal. 4:4: ‘He was born of a woman.’ From this comparison of passages of Scripture, the explanation of the angel’s greeting will become clear.” *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists*, Vol. One, Book One, tr. Richard J. Dinda, Malone, TX: The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy, 2009, p. 113, correction in braces added; the original had verse 22, underscore added.

 Luther continues on the Gospel order of old and new: "Corollary. Old songs are all shameful, scurrilous, carnal and worldly songs, even if they should first be sung or composed today. New songs, however, are all psalms, honorable, holy, godly, and spiritual songs, even if they dated back to the time of the first man; indeed, these are the newest songs. Thus says the Lord (Matt. 20:16): 'The last will be first, and that first last.' Thus the songs of our time are surely extremely old, even though in point of time they are the latest. Second, the newer or more recent a person is in the soul, the newer and more recent he can make one and the same song. And the same applies to the old." Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 10, p. 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. 10**Isaiah 65:17-19**. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. 11**Philippians 3:21**. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. 12*The Large Catechism*, **Part Second, Of The Creed, Article III**.38-39, *Triglotta*, 689. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. 13**Romans 10:1 7**. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. 14“**113. What was the image of God?** The image of God consisted in this – A. That man *knew God* and was *perfectly happy* in such knowledge. 263 [Ye] have put on the new man, which is renewed in *knowledge* after the *image of Him that created him*. *Col. 3:10*B. That man was *perfectly holy* and blessed. 264 Put on the new man, which *after God* is created in *righteousness and true holiness*. *Eph. 4:24****.*** ... **114. Does man still bear the image of God?** Man *lost* the image of God when he *fell into sin*. In *believers*, a *beginning* of its renewal is made. Only in *heaven*, however, will this image be *fully* restored. 265 [Adam] begat a son *in his own likeness*, after his image. *Gen. 5:3****.*** ... 266 I will *behold Thy face in righteousness*; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, *with Thy likeness*. Ps. 17:15.” *The Small Catechism*, pp. 96, 97. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. 15**I Peter 1:12**. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. 16*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 514. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. 17**Galatians 3:26-27**. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. 18**II Corinthians 5:17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. 19*The Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, **Article III: Of Love and the Fulfilling of the Law**.230, 231, *Triglotta*, p. 217, underscore added. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. 20“Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things become new.” **II Corinthians 5:17**. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)