

*An outline of today's sermon:*

## **"YOUR FREEDOM IS GOD'S WORK"**

Text: Romans 8:1-2 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death."

INTRODUCTION – As I write this sermon, America is just beginning life in seclusion to fight a microscopic little tyrant called corona virus. Only those who must be out and about are not in their homes. The rest of us, are working from home, studying from home with online lessons, or simply finding ways to spend our time in private. We are isolated from each other. Physical confinement hurts and is a heavy burden to bear, but it pales in comparison to solitary confinement. Prisoners of War that served weeks and months in solitary confinement describe the horrors of such excruciating suffering. And yet, this physical and mental suffering pales in comparison to spiritual isolation.

**1 – The Trial of Eden.**

**2 – The Righteous Lord God and the two law breakers.**

**3 – The sentence came swiftly.**

**4 – Effects of sins are unlimited.**

**5 – The prototypes of the Savior.**

**6 – Finally, Jesus is born in Bethlehem!**

**7 – Therefore – a weak word, yet immensely important!**

CONCLUSION – From the trial in Eden that condemned us all the way to the Baptismal font that absolved us through the Judgment Day that is awaiting us, we are the Lord's. Because of the Father's great love, he never allowed us to taste the bitter despair our dear Lord Jesus experienced. He drank our poisoned cup that we might live. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Jesus Is Our Redemption

In the temple Jesus said, "If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death" (John 8:51). For Jesus came to taste death for us—to drink the cup of suffering to the dregs in order that we might be released from its power. Clinging to His life-giving words, we are delivered from death's sting and its eternal judgment. Christ is our High Priest, who entered the Most Holy Place and with His own blood obtained everlasting redemption for His people (Heb. 9:11–15). He is the One who was before Abraham was, and yet is his descendant. He is the promised Son who carries the wood up the mountain for the sacrifice, who is bound and laid upon the altar of the cross. He is the ram who is offered in our place, who is willingly caught in the thicket of our sin, and who wears the crown of thorns upon His head (Gen. 22:1–14). Though Jesus is dishonored by the sons of the devil, He is vindicated by the Father through the cross.

### Readings

#### Old Testament Reading

*Ezekiel 37:1-14*

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus, says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

So, I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." So, I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

## **Psalm**

*Psalm 130:1-8; antiphon: v. 7*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!

O Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,

O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness,

that you may be feared.

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

my soul waits for the Lord

more than watchmen for the morning,

more than watchmen for the morning.

O Israel, hope in the LORD!

For with the LORD there is steadfast love,

and with him is plentiful redemption.

And he will redeem Israel

from all his iniquities.

## **Epistle**

*Romans 8:1-11*

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

## **Verse of the Day**

I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

## Holy Gospel

John 11:17-27

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eleventh chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So, when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

### **CHARITABLE INFORMATION**

**SPECIAL MISSIONS** for the first quarter missions will go to Concordia Publishing House in Brazil. CPH is an official agency of the Brazilian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Whose mission is to foster doctrinal unity by publishing only books that went through "doctrinal review". May the Lord bless our special gifts of gratitude.

### **CHURCH INFORMATION**

**CALLED CHILDCARE/PRESCHOOL TEACHER:** We are beginning our search to find a Called full-time teacher to lead our childcare classroom as well as some possible preschool opportunities. This position will continue to build on our church and school relationship and provide Christian education to our smallest of children. We would like your recommendations and referrals of possible candidates who are Synodically-trained and meet the WI-licensed Early Childhood requirements. Please email the preschool at [preschool@bslc-wi.org](mailto:preschool@bslc-wi.org) or Duane Graf by March 31 and provide the potential candidate's name and current position/location. Please mention why you believe this person will be a good fit for our congregation. Our committee welcomes all personal recommendations and will follow up with you as a part of the Call process. Please pray with us that God will guide our committee with wisdom, and that He will provide our congregation with the right person!

**THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS:** how to designate your Thrivent choice dollars to a Charitable Organization – Thrivent staff can HELP you every step of the way in designating your Thrivent Choice dollars to a charitable organization. 1) Call **1-800-847-4836** and say "THRIVENT CHOICE" and follow the directions. 2) If you have your Thrivent ID, tell them what it is. If not, that isn't a problem – go to step 3. 3) Your **DATE OF BIRTH**. 4) Tell them you want to designate your Thrivent Choice dollars. There are many organizations that are eligible. 5) If you want to designate them for Helping Hands our full name is **Helping Hands Eastern European Ministries**, state that. They'll have the ID number and everything else needed to process it.

### **PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSIONS**

(In order to protect the privacy of our members, no names will be mentioned in our prayers)

***We continue to pray for those who are in need of medical attention.***

***We also remember in our prayers the friends and relatives of our members.***

***We pray the Lord to watch over those who are serving in the military.***