

Living with Dying

“[I]t is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:20-21).



Sanctity of Life Sunday • Lutherans For Life

Because the “wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23), we all live with dying in one sense or another. We face death, terminal illnesses, chronic diseases, pain and suffering. But with Paul, we know that because of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us in His death and resurrection, He will be honored whether we live or die. Our times are in His hands.

Prelude

Opening Hymn “Christ Is Our Cornerstone” (LSB 912)¹

Christ is our corner stone, On Him alone we build;
With His true saints alone The courts of heav’n are filled.
On His great love Our hopes we place Of present grace And joys above.

Here may we gain from heav’n The grace which we implore,
And may that grace, once giv’n, Be with us ever more
Until that day When all the blest To endless rest Are called away.

△ Oh, then, with hymns of praise These hallowed courts shall ring;
Our voices we will raise The Three in One to sing
And thus proclaim In joyful song, Both loud and long, That glorious name.

Invocation

P Remembering the victory over sin and death God gives in our baptisms, we begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen!

Confession

P Redeemed of God, let us draw near with a humble heart and confess our sins to our heavenly Father and ask that, for Jesus sake, He would forgive us.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C Who made heaven and earth.

P I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,

C And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Lord God, we confess that we do not always honor Jesus in our living. We live to honor ourselves. We do not always honor Jesus in our dying for we fail to trust in His gracious presence and loving purpose. In thought, word, and deed we fail to honor Jesus. We plead for Your mercy for His sake.

- P** People of God, your heavenly Father grants You His mercy in Christ who bore God’s punishment for all of your sins and won the victory over death through His resurrection. You can be assured of His presence and grace. Therefore, in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen! Thank you, Father. Renew our spirits and enable us to honor you in our living and in our dying.

Entrance Psalm (Psalm 116:1-9)

- P** I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy.
- C** Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
- P** The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.
- C** Then I called on the name of the LORD; “O LORD, I pray, deliver my soul!”
- P** Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; our God is merciful.
- C** The LORD preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.
- P** Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
- C** For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Kyrie

- C** Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Hymn of Praise “Praise the Almighty” (LSB 797:1)²

Praise the Almighty, my soul, adore Him!
 Yes, I will laud Him until death;
 With songs and anthems I come before Him
 As long as He allows me breath.
 From Him my life and all things came;
 Bless, O my soul, His holy name. Alleluia, alleluia!

Collect

P The Lord be with you.

C **And with your spirit.**

P Let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father, who won the victory over death through Your Son, Jesus Christ, enable us not to be ashamed, but give us courage so that Christ may be honored in our living and in our dying through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen!**

Old Testament Reading 2 Kings 19:1-8, 15-18

As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, who was over the household, and Shebna the secretary, and the senior priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz. They said to him, “Thus says Hezekiah, This is a day of distress, of rebuke, and of disgrace; children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth. It may be that the LORD your God heard all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke the words that the LORD your God has heard; therefore lift up your prayer for the remnant that is left.” When the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah, Isaiah said to them, “Say to your master, ‘Thus says the LORD: Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have reviled me. Behold, I will put a spirit in him, so that he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land, and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land.’” The Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria fighting against Libnah, for he heard that the king had left Lachish.

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said: “O LORD the God of Israel, who is enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed ...”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual

- P** Praise the LORD, all nations!
- C** Extol him, all peoples!
- P** For great is his steadfast love toward us,
- C** And the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.
- P** Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
- C** Bring an offering and come into his courts! (Psalm 117; 96:8)

Epistle Reading Philippians 1:18c-26

Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, so that in me you may have ample cause to glory in Christ Jesus, because of my coming to you again.

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

- P** The holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter.
- C** Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel Reading John 9:1-7

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Having said these things, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

Creed

Hymn of the Day “For Me to Live is Jesus” (LSB 742)³

For me to live is Jesus, To die is gain for me;
So when my Savior pleases, I meet with death willingly.

For Christ, my Lord, my brother, I leave this world so dim
And gladly seek another, Where I shall be with Him.

My woes are nearly over, Though long and dark the road;
My sin His merits cover, And I have peace with God.

Lord, when my pow’rs are failing, My breath comes heavily,
And words are unavailing, O hear my sighs to Thee.

In my last hour, O grant me A slumber soft and still,
No doubts to vex or haunt me, Save anchored in Thy will;

And so to Thee still cleaving When death shall come to me,
I fall asleep believing And wake in heav’n with Thee!

Sermon

Offering

Prayers

- P** Father in Heaven, we come before You as people who live in the victory over death won by Your Son, Jesus Christ.
- C** **Therefore we are confident You will hear our prayer.**
- P** We pray for our nation and its leaders.
- C** **Instill in them a sense of the innate value given to all human life regardless of condition of health, age, or abilities.**
- P** We pray for Your Church.
- C** **May she boldly and courageously proclaim Christ’s glorious victory over sin and death and connect the comfort and hope of this message to those who are living with dying.**
- P** We pray for Your people in this congregation.
- C** **Enable us to turn to You and the assurance of Your promises in the midst of our suffering and uncertainties.**
- P** We pray for those facing difficult situations and end-of-life decisions.

- C** Help them trust in Your great love given in Jesus that assures them of Your presence and power. Move us to care for them in real, practical ways.
- P** We pray for those who have made wrong choices or are uncertain about choices made.
- C** Surround and uphold them with Your grace and give them peace through the blood of the cross.
- P** We pray for Lutherans For Life.
- C** May they continue to serve You by equipping us all to be Gospel-motivated voices For Life to one another and to the world.
- P** We now bring the needs and joys of our congregation before You. (*Special intercessions may be offered here.*) Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, who has taught us to pray
- C** Our Father ...

(The Communion liturgy may begin at this point according to local custom.)

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
- C** Amen!

Closing Hymn “Lord, Dismiss Us with your Blessing” (LSB 924)⁴

Lord, dismiss us with Your blessing, Fill our hearts with joy and peace;
 Let us each, Your love possessing, Triumph in redeeming grace.
 O refresh us; O refresh us, Trav’ling through this wilderness.

Thanks we give and adoration For Your Gospel’s joyful sound.
 May the fruits of Your salvation In our hearts and lives abound.
 Ever faithful, ever faithful To Your truth may we be found.

Savior, when Your love shall call us From our struggling pilgrim way,
 Let not fear of death appall us, Glad Your summons to obey.
 May we ever, may we ever Reign with You in endless day.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Text: Latin, c. 8th cent.; tr. John Chandler, 1806-76, alt. Tune: John Darwall, 1731-89; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941. Text and music: Public domain
- 2 Text: Johann Daniel Herrnschmidt, 1675-1723; tr. Alfred E. R. Brauer, 1866-1949, alt. Tune: *New-vermehrte Christliche Seelenharph*, Ansbach, 1665; setting: *Christian Worship*, 1993. Text and music: Public domain
- 3 Text: *Ein schön geistlich Gesangbuch*, Jena, 1609; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt. Tune: Melchior Vulpius, c. 1570-1615; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941. Text and music: Public domain
- 4 Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740-1817, sts. 1-2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823-1903, st. 3. alt. Tune: Henry T. Smart, 1813-79; setting: *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 1941. Text and music: Public domain

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