

# **By His Wounds We Are Healed**

**April 1**

**Week 5:**

**The Wounds of Stealing**

## **Order of Service**

*Jesus is accused of forbidding the paying of taxes.*

### **Opening Hymn**

“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”  
Carol

In the cross of Christ I glory, tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time.  
All the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o’ertake me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy,  
Never shall the cross forsake me; lo, it glows with peace and joy.

When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way,  
From the cross the radiance streaming adds more luster to the day.

Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure by the cross are sanctified;  
Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

### **Response**

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**C Amen.**

P By a perversion of justice, Christ was taken away.

**C Who could have imagined his future?**

P For he was cut off from the land of the living,

**C stricken for the transgression of God’s people.**

P Christ was wounded for our transgressions,

**C crushed for our iniquities;**

P upon him was the punishment that made us whole,

**C and by his wounds we are healed.**

## Confession and Forgiveness

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

**C Most merciful God, we confess to you that we have broken your commandments by our own thoughts, words, and deeds. We have stolen from you in our failure to love, serve, and obey you. We have not loved our brothers and sisters as we ought, and we have not cared for your creation. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, and give us the healing power of your love that we may walk again in your ways and live to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P God is gracious and merciful, and desires that we be made free of the burden of our sins. Through Jesus Christ, who bore the cross for our sake and for the sake of the whole world, there is healing, hope, and life. Your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**P Amen.**

**Hymn**

“Amazing Grace”  
Carol

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost but now am found, was blind, but now I see.  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved.  
How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!  
Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.  
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
The Lord has promised good to me; his Word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

**Old Testament Reading**

Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

**Epistle Reading**

Romans 13:1-7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. <sup>2</sup>Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgement. <sup>3</sup>For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; <sup>4</sup>for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup>Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. <sup>6</sup>For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. <sup>7</sup>Pay to all what is due to them—taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

## **Gospel Reading**

Luke 23:1-5

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate.<sup>2</sup> They began to accuse him, saying, 'We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.'<sup>3</sup> Then Pilate asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' He answered, 'You say so.'<sup>4</sup> Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, 'I find no basis for an accusation against this man.'<sup>5</sup> But they were insistent and said, 'He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.'

## **Children's Message**

### **Sermon Hymn**

"Here In This Place"  
Carol

Here in this place the new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away; see in this space our fears and our dreamings brought her to you in the light of this day. Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name.

We are the young, our lives are a myst'ry, we are the old who yearn for your face; we have been sung throughout all of his hist'ry, called to be light to the whole human race. Gather us in, the rich and the haughty, gather us in, the proud and the strong; give us a heart, so meek and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song.

Here we will take the wine and the water, here we will take the bead of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth. Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give us to eat the bread that is you; nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away here in this place the new light is shining, now is the kingdom, and now is the day. Gather us in the hold us forever, gather us in and make us your own; gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

### **Sermon**

Tonight's message is about the commandment that forbids stealing. It encourages us to look out for our neighbors and their lives and welfare through love, service, and justice on their behalf. The Pharisees in our gospel for tonight make a false charge against Jesus accusing him of forbidding the payment of taxes to the emperor. But this was only a dishonest attempt to trap the son of God. At Jesus' trial before Pilate they would try to use this incident as an attempt to make Jesus out to be a revolutionary. But Jesus silenced their craftiness by saying to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

Jesus did not steal, but his mission was certainly revolutionary. And his call “to God the things that are God’s” reminds us of ways that we steal from God.

In today’s society, stealing is more and more becoming a common-day occurrence. People today have not only to be protected from being taken advantage of for what are truly their possessions, but even to have their own identity protected. Entitlement, greed, selfishness, and unequal wealth distribution of some are at real odds over the poor and hungry who continue to go without. It is not hard to see how many look out only for themselves, and at the same time take advantage of their neighbors. That is what stealing is: taking advantage of others, acquiring from others by unjust means. The just judgment for this would be more than we could ever bear.

On Good Friday, Jesus took his place between two thieves, on that hill of the skull, as he is crucified as a criminal. We know that He didn’t steal, nor did he commit a crime-- But that he suffered as one who did. He suffered and died for us, we are the criminals, and he took our place. The very heart of God is wounded in the death of Jesus for the sins of the world. But incredibly, by his wounds, we are healed. That’s hard to handle. We don’t want to think that we are the guilty ones and then we don’t want people to do for us. How many of us can’t even handle getting gifts from others without wanting to one up the giver. And we are totally against someone else doing for us, when we think we can just do it ourselves.

But that is part of the healing that God brings to us. Through Christ our hearts and our lives can be freed not only from judgment, but from our desires and guilt. Because of Christ we are completely free to live and choose differently. It is a free ticket from the hell we make for ourselves and others, as well as an opportunity to live for God, even eternally.

Come with me to the story of the Prodigal son in Luke 15. The youngest son, the prodigal, sought his father’s inheritance now for himself. He essentially wished his father to be dead so that he could take his portion and live on his own. As we know from the parable, that plan didn’t work out very well for the son. Even though the Father gives him everything he wanted, he squanders it and is left with nothing. The son comes home with a sense of his wrong doing, his theft from the father’s good graces, but still with wanting more. But the father is extravagant in loving his son, and in his unbelievable grace not only accepts the boy upon his return, but picks up his skirts and shamelessly runs to him and embraces him, and throws a feast in his honor. The elder son, who is so much an image of the world, knew this younger son only as a thief of the father’s property. His heart was cold to both the merciful father and the son who

was welcomed home. But as this elder son is without mercy, the father has an abundance of mercy. God welcomes home all of us who are thieves and criminals, living in ways that are contrary to his will. We all get to come home in mercy that does not leave us in the judgment of death. This mercy reaches out to the elder son as well, seeking to melt his cold heart with the mercy of God's abundant gifts.

What do we learn? That God is different, holy, loving beyond common sense. He accepts us and wants to heal us, and then empowers us to be agents of love for our neighbors. We get to take our place with them, among them, for their good and for their well-being. We get to look out for our neighbors, trusting that God is doing all the looking out for us. Instead of looking over our shoulder, we can be people using the head on our shoulders to imagine ways of greater giving and goodness for others. As Jesus said in his Sermon on the Mount, "Do not resist an evildoer," but "give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:39-42). We are givers because of the gift we have received in Jesus. And we can be that today. Give to your family with your presence, staying a home right now gives us that opportunity. Make it a gift though, be patient, so love beyond measure, and just love on each other. Be there for the neighbor in need. Share, look for ways to safely help others. A lot of losing work, unable to collect or live on unemployment, a lot of trying to handle work and family at the same time, a lot of just dealing with less because they are afraid or unable to go out to get what they need, or maybe it's just not available in stores now. This order is frightening, irritating and causing harm, but it is necessary for us to live. I know the pain, and I call you to acknowledge it, but not to stay there. Rely on God's love, grace and mercy and look at what he's giving you now, how you can love now, how you can share now. Be okay waiting, the blessing will come. I believe that people will come through to help each other. If we all care enough for each other to find ways to stay healthy, not spread the virus, and then to serve each other, and love each other in new ways. I believe in that love of God that will embarrass the world as He runs to us, skirts in the air to embrace us too.

Near the end of the gospel of Matthew, we hear a parable about the sheep and the goats (chapter 25). The goats are those who have spent their lives butting out others from the trough, seeking to get to the head of the line, and not caring all that much about the poor sheep they have butted out of the way or trampled underfoot. The sheep, on the other hand, have looked out for all others—yes, the sheep, but even the goats!—provide for their neighbors as needs arise. The parable is not meant for us to reduce its meaning to sheer moralism. It is a parable of faith. Those who trust in Jesus live and move like "little Christs" in

the world caring for the many needs of people. They see their neighbors as important, treasures in God's eyes, creatures and children of the one God who has given them to us to love.

This sharing of love, is the giving "to God the things that are God's." Jesus did this for us. We get to live as the ambassadors of his love for others. May God bless you abundantly, and may you seek to share that.

**Carol Topolski      "Lamb of God"**

### **Prayers of the People**

P Let us pray for the Church, for all in need, and for the whole of God's creation. That throughout these forty days of Lent, you may give your people hope that it is Jesus, our Lord, who leads the way and takes into his body on the cross the sins of the whole world.

**C Heal us, O God.**

P For all that you provide us in this life and for all that you provide for all people everywhere, that we may put away envy and be grateful for your gifts.

**C Heal us, O God.**

P That we may recognize those in need, especially the hungry and the poor, pray for them, work for change in government for their good, and seek to uphold them from the resources of our own charity.

**C Heal us, O God.**

P That those who are sick or suffering may be blessed with better health and wholeness.

**C Heal us, O God.**

P For those who are dying, that, leaving all their earthly things behind, they may come to embrace the greater treasures in your eternal presence.

**C Heal us, O God.**

P Into your healing, wounded hands for our sake, we commend all for whom we pray.

**C By Christ's wounds, we are healed. Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen**

## **Blessing**

P May the healing presence of almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always.

**C Amen.**

## **Closing Hymn**

Carol

“Give Me Jesus”

In the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise, in the morning when I rise, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*

*Give me Jesus, give me Jesus. You may have all the rest, give me Jesus.*

Dark midnight as my cry, dark midnight was my cry, dark midnight was my cry, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*

Just about the break of day, just about the break of day, just about the break of day, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*

Oh, when I come to die, oh, when I come to die, oh, when I come to die, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*

And when I want to sing, and when I want to sing, and when I want to sing, give me Jesus.

*Refrain*