



First Christian Reformed Church of Lynden From Generation to Generation for the Glory of God

God's precious and exceedingly great promises in hard times

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Scripture

Matthew 4:4 But Jesus answered, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 27:26-54

²⁶ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. ²⁸ And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹ and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.

³¹ And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

³² As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³ And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴ they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵ And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. ³⁶ Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. ³⁷ And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." ³⁸ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. ³⁹ And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads ⁴⁰ and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. ⁴³ He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." ⁴⁸ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹ But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

⁵¹ And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵² The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Song

Psalm 59:16 But I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress.

[You can Google the hymn to hear it if you would like to sing along.]

And Can It Be

And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness Divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

Prayer

Praying the Words of Jesus on the Cross in a Season of Pandemic

Opening

Holy and Living God,

As this pandemic continues to awaken our fears, to disrupt our lives, and to reduce the health and lives of those we love, we struggle to find words to say to you. And so, in this dark hour we join with your Son, in praying the words he spoke in the very darkest hour.

The First Word

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Loving Father, we are uncertain and afraid. In our fear, we look for someone or something to blame: institutions, leaders, neighbors, and even family members are all easy targets of our resentment. As our frustration toward others grows, we ask that you forgive them, and then we ask you to forgive us, also.

Make us aware of the ways, small and big, that our own sin makes this situation harder for us and others, and forgive us.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Second Word

“Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

Eternal God, as this pandemic brings our mortality and the consequences of sin into sharper relief, we thank you that you have made a way by your death and resurrection that we may repent and receive your grace to save us in life and in death. We thank you that, in Christ, you make all things new.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Third Word

“Woman, behold your son..... Behold your mother.”

Son of God, even as you changed the course of history on the cross, you took time to notice and make arrangements to care for the very tangible needs of someone you loved. As we find ourselves caught up in a moment that feels historic and unprecedented, direct our attention to notice and make arrangements to care for the very tangible needs of those around us.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Fourth Word

“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”) Holy Spirit, your Word describes you as our comforter and counselor, but for some of us, you have never seemed so far away. We feel abandoned, exposed, and left to fend for ourselves.

The most vulnerable among us seem to be most affected by this disease. Our churches are empty while our hospitals are overrun.

We struggle to see your hand at work amidst the suffering. We join with the Psalmist in crying out,

“How long, O Lord, will you forget us forever?”

“We are overwhelmed with troubles, and our lives draw near to death.” “Do you show your wonders to the dead?”

“Do not be far from us, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.” “Do not hide your face from us. But listen to our cry for help.”

“You have taken from us friend and neighbor--darkness is our closest friend.”

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Fifth Word “I thirst.”

Blessed Savior, who faced death thirsty and alone, reveal yourself to those who face their death in both physical agony and at social distance. Heal their bodies and save their souls.

May those overwhelmed by physical and emotional pain, turn to you and find that you are not distant from our suffering, but find that you are a man of sorrows who is familiar with suffering. By your wounds, may we experience healing unto eternal life.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Sixth Word “It is finished.”

King of Kings, as we reach the end of ourselves, and feel we cannot go any further,

we thank you that you finished the work you were sent to do:

that your kingdom is secure and not even death can now separate us from the love of God in you, our Lord.

Enable us by your Spirit to be faithful to our call in the confidence that you have and will accomplish all that you have promised.

Grant us strength to endure our suffering, bear our crosses, deny ourselves and live for you, even unto death.

By your Spirit, empower us to live and love so faithfully and selflessly that the good news of your kingdom may be proclaimed through our lives.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

The Seventh Word

“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

Holy Spirit, when our lives reach their earthly end, help us entrust our deaths, as you have helped us entrust our lives, into your faithful hands.

Silent Prayer

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Adapted from *The Worship Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, CRC Publications, 2004, pp. 619-22.)