

# Good Friday 2025

## Lenten Theme: *The Windows of Lent*

### **“A Dead Body”**

Text: Romans 6:1-11

*Ye who think of sin but lightly Nor suppose the evil great  
Here may view its nature rightly, Here its guilt may estimate.  
Mark the Sacrifice appointed, See who bears the awful load;  
'Tis the WORD, the LORD'S ANOINTED, Son of Man and Son of God.  
(TLH 153)*

May God the Holy Spirit enable you to recognize your role in this solemn event – the crucifixion of our Lord – not as an idle spectator, but as an active, guilty participant. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians, into one final window we peer this evening. We have learned not to trust our first impressions but to look more closely to understand what is truly there – to look with eyes instructed by the Holy Spirit who resides in us. We have seen many disconcerting, appalling scenes in our *Windows of Lent*, scenes that have reminded us of the breadth and magnitude of our own personal sin. So it comes as no surprise that in this final window we see that which we fully expected we would eventually see in the macabre house that is Lent – a dead body. This we expected because we have always known Lent to be a place and time of suffering and death.

Yet having learned throughout Lent never to trust our first impression of what we are seeing, we look more closely this evening. Truly death is present in this room. Truly there is a body, and just as truly that body is of our Savior, the Sacrificial Lamb of God. Yet when we look more closely we see that *his is not the only body*.

The text that will instruct our eyes and our hearts on this Good Friday as to just what we are seeing in this room of death is found in the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter:

**ESV(Romans 6:1-11) *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united***

***with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.***

This is God's Word. Hold these words in reverence and learn from them - recognizing the Author, for it is written, "***Blessed are those who hear God's words and treasure them.***" So also we pray, "***Sanctify us by the truth, O Lord. Your word is truth.***" Amen.

The solemn event that we commemorate this evening, the death of our Savior Jesus, *means something* – several things, actually. To deny the actual, physical death of Jesus Christ is, first of all, to deny the whole of the Christian faith. Not even the godless, however, tend to deny Jesus' death as real and true. This is to be expected, of course, since truth, to the world, is dictated by what can be seen and by personal experience. Few today deny that Jesus actually existed, therefore *of course* he died. Everyone dies, so of course if Jesus lived, he also died. The context editors of Wikipedia, that bastion of irrefutable truth, nonetheless insist on injecting the little bit of doubt the godless have at their disposal by inanely declaring: "*There is no extant contemporary record of the execution of Jesus, though Jesus' crucifixion is described in the four canonical gospels, referred to in the New Testament epistles, and a consensus of historians accept it was a historical event, although there is no consensus among historians on the exact details.*" The devil truly is in the details here, isn't it. Truth is apparently not truth unless and until "a consensus" of the godless make it so.

The denial of the actual death of Jesus really isn't the main problem. That's not where the godless form their main battle lines. Though they are happy to infuse doubt wherever possible, including also doubt that Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross, they really aren't troubled by conceding that point. The forces of evil are gathered en masse at the *meaning* of Christ's death. This is where the battle will rage between Christians and the enemies of the cross until the end of time.

To put the thing in terms of our window this evening, the devil and his minions *want* you to look into this window. They *want* you to see the

body and they *want* you to recognize it as the body of Jesus. The problem is that that is *all* that they want you to see. They want you to see a dead savior, and then to turn away in despair. They want you thereby to be convinced of one of two things: either that Jesus was, in fact, *the* Promised Messiah *who failed*, or that he was just another in the long line of pretenders – a fake messiah who only pretended to be what he in fact was not.

Yet, by the grace of God, we've learned during our journey through Lent to question our first impressions. We've learned that there is often more to see than first meets our human eyes. We've learned to look with the eyes of faith to make sure we are seeing all that our God intended. The first indication that we are not yet seeing all that we are supposed to see in this window, that we are not yet fully comprehending all that is actually there, is provided in our text for this evening.

Look closer. Look carefully. We do indeed see the dead body of Jesus, but tacked to the wall we can also see the coroner's report, which reveals to us also the *cause of death*. Jesus didn't just die as all human beings die. He died to pay for the sins of the world. That was the cause of death. We sang of this great truth earlier in this very service:

*Make me see Your great distress, anguish, and affliction,  
bonds and stripes and wretchedness and Your crucifixion;  
make me see how scourge and rod, spear and nails did wound You,  
how for them You died, O God, who with thorns had crowned You.*

*Yet, O Lord, not thus alone make me see Your passion,  
but its cause to me make known and its termination.  
Ah! I also and my sin wrought Your deep affliction;  
this indeed the cause has been of Your crucifixion.*

The very recognition that the *cause* of Jesus' death was *our sin* in itself represents a terrible defeat for Satan. Ever the corrupt lawyer, the devil forever tries to suppress the evidence that no one had the power to take Jesus' life without his permission – that Jesus died *willingly* to pay mankind's sin debt. The devil would have us believe that what we are seeing is just another body, the corpse of a man who died like every other man. He absolutely does not want us to know that Jesus laid down his own life.

Yet the enemies of Christ are nothing if not relentless. Our text reveals how they quickly reassembled and attacked from another direction. "*If,*" they reasoned with poison logic, "*Jesus died to pay for all of mankind's sin, then by all means sin freely.*" It gets even more twisted. "*Since Jesus is*

*glorified for paying for our sin, then enhance and increase his glory by sinning more. More sin, more payment. More payment, more glory for Jesus.*" Paul addresses this evil in the first verses of our text: ***What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!***

Many have tried to capture in English the flavor of the Greek phrase translated here as: ***By no means!*** It's the emphatic Greek way of saying, *Of course not! Perish the thought! Heaven forbid! Not a chance!* The original phrase acknowledges that a misguided individual *could* actually opt to sin more in a misguided effort to enhance Christ's glory, but denies in the strongest of terms that that is something a true Christian would ever even consider actually doing. *No way!*

This is actually further evidence of why we need to look carefully into our window this evening. It's all too easy to see only what we expect to see on Good Friday – the body of Jesus. Look closer, with the eyes of faith and understanding, and you will see that Christ's is not the only body. According to God the Holy Spirit, speaking to us through the Apostle Paul in our text, look carefully and you will see that your own body is also there.

From our text: ***"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him..."*** Again, how easy for us to see only what we expect to see. How foolish to imagine that we are ever meant to be detached spectators of God's Word. God in his Word tells us that you and I were crucified and buried with Jesus. Our text carefully lays out this startling revelation. Before we could become God's children, our slavery to sin and Satan had to be broken – through death. Through the death of Jesus, certainly, but also our own death. That is death's power. It kills, but it also frees. Our text explains: ***We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.*** The ***"old self"*** – which is all that we were before we were brought to faith – died with Jesus when we were brought to faith, most of us at our baptism. That's how any why we see the loathsome rotten corpse of our old sinful flesh in this room of death. That's all that we were before we were brought to faith, before we were ***"baptized into Christ Jesus."*** Just as Jesus had to die before he could rise, so also our ***"old self"*** needed to be crucified together with him before we could arise as God's new creations.

This is God the Holy Spirit's own explanation of how and why God's children would never think to give themselves over to sin. We've died to

sin. We've been freed from its mastery over us. We are no longer slaves. Again from our text: ***For the death he (Jesus) died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.***

This is exactly why we need to be able to recognize the loathsome rotten corpse of our old sinful flesh lying there next to our Savior Jesus – to remind us, moment by moment and for the rest of our lives, that that always and only evil ***“old self”*** was crucified with Christ. We are no longer slaves. On the contrary, ***“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”***<sup>ESV(2</sup> Corinthians 5:17) This sublime truth is not just about behavior modification. The core message here is not that we need to clean up our act and live holier lives here on earth because Jesus died for us. This is about eternity, as our Savior's death was about eternity. It is about resurrection from the dead. Hear again that ultimate end result laid out in our text: ***For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his... Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.***

This day, Good Friday, is really then not just about death. It is also about life. Eternal life. It is why we can and should celebrate both our Savior's death and our own, both the spiritual death of our ***“old self”*** when we were brought to faith in our Savior Jesus, and the physical death that will one day serve as the gate or passage to life eternal. We now know, according to the promise of God's Word, ***“if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.”***

Mourn on this Good Friday, as is appropriate, the sin that caused your Savior's suffering and death. But do not mourn ***“as those who have no hope.”*** Jesus' death has earned for us eternal life in heaven. As he rose from that death that could not hold him, so will we. Amen.

## The Sermon

<sup>ESV</sup>(**Romans 6:1-11**) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Lenten Theme: The Windows of Lent: “We See a Body”**

**The Post Sermon Hymn** – 334 (*Stanzas 1-3, 5*)  
“Upon the Cross Extended”

**The Prayer of the Day, followed by the Lord’s Prayer**

**The Benediction**

**P:** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the love of God the Father,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C:** **Amen, Amen, Amen.** (*Sung by all*)

**The Closing Hymn** – 142 (*Melody of Hymn 301*)  
“On My Heart Imprint Your Image”

**Silent Prayer**

=====

As is our Good Friday custom, the congregation will be ushered from the sanctuary in silence following the closing hymn. Those in attendance are asked to leave the church quietly thereafter. We observe this custom in solemn commemoration of the death of our Lord, and yet we do so not as those who mourn without hope. We commemorate this solemn event as those who recognize that the debt for our sins was paid in full by our Lord Jesus on this night. There is a time to mourn and a time to rejoice. So also we solemnly observe the death of our Savior this evening (a time to mourn) but in full confidence of the joy of the empty tomb on Easter morning. All are therefore invited to gather here again on Easter morning for that greatest of all Christian holidays.



# Good Friday Service

St Paul Lutheran Church  
Bismarck, ND

# ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E. Divide Ave.

Bismarck, ND 58501 (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

[www.bismarcklutheran.org](http://www.bismarcklutheran.org)

Mick Johnson – President

Angela Pfennig – Organist

Michael Roehl – Pastor

## Good Friday Service – April 18, 2025

### The Opening Hymn - 323 (Stanzas 1-5)

*"Jesus, I Will Ponder Now"*

### Invocation

**Pastor:** *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Congregation:** (Spoken) **Amen.**

### Scripture Readings and Responses (From SoC Hymn 327)

**P:** *On this most solemn occasion we commemorate the death that brought us life.*

#### **Zechariah 12:10**

1) O dearest Jesus, what law have You broken  
that such sharp sentence should on You be spoken?  
Of what great crime have You to make confession, what dark transgression?

#### **Matthew 27:27-31**

2) They crown Your head with thorns,  
they smite, they scourge You;  
with cruel mockings to the cross they urge You;  
they give You gall to drink, they still decry You; they crucify You.

#### **Isaiah 53:3-6**

3) Whence come these sorrows, whence this mortal anguish?  
It is my sins for which You, Lord, must languish;  
yes, all the wrath, the woe that You inherit, this I do merit.

#### **John 10:11-15, 18**

4) What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!  
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;  
the Master pays the debt His servants owe Him, who would not know Him.

#### **Romans 8:31-34**

5) The sinless Son of God must die in sadness,  
the sinful child of man may live in gladness;  
we forfeited our lives, yet are acquitted; God is committed.

### Mark 8:34-38

6) I'll think upon Your mercy without ceasing,  
that earth's vain joys to me no more be pleasing;  
to do Your will shall be my sole endeavor  
henceforth forever.

### Confession and Absolution

**P:** *Jesus Christ, our Lord, paid the penalty for our sins upon Calvary's cross. Because of that sacrifice, I, according to His authority and by His command, announce to you that all of your sins are forgiven, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

### All: Hymn 297 (Stanzas 1 & 2)

Christ, the Life of all the living, Christ, the Death of death, our foe,  
Who, Your life for me once giving in the darkest depths of woe:  
Through Your sufferings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit:  
Thousand, thousand thanks we sing, Dearest Jesus, Savior-King.

You, ah! You have taken on You bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;  
Pain and scorn were heaped upon You, You! the sinless Son of God!  
Thus You did my soul deliver from the bonds of sin forever.  
Thousand, thousand thanks we sing, Dearest Jesus, Savior-King.

### The Apostolic Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

### The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 328 (Stanzas 1-2, 4-5)

*"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"*