**Morning Devotion for Thursday, April 16, 2020**

**“Why”**

**Welcome to Morning Devotion at Trinity Lutheran Church.**

**As we celebrate the message of Easter during this very first week after we have worshipped together in the deep substance and richness of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday), Good Friday, and the climactic Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord, we remember that even Jesus Himself was willing to wait three days and two nights for God to answer the question to which He already knew the answer.**

**Yes, even Jesus in His innocence and holy perfection, could ask that most human of questions when things go awry and amiss, when a seemingly unsolvable puzzle or challenge or situation arises, when pain and suffering come upon us. Why? Why him, why her, why me, Lord?**

**After being tortured throughout the night, and then crucified for six hours, Jesus approaches the hour of His physical death. He did not face merely His own extreme pain and loss of life as one of us would in like material circumstances. He knew and was able to anticipate the reality that God the Father would not be present with love and mercy in this ordeal, that His heavenly Father would and must turn His back on His only beloved Son at 3:00 pm and allow the full wrath and punishment against the entirety of humanity’s sin to fall upon Him.**

**Jesus--who as God understood the full reality of divine holiness, of divine anger, of divine justice, of original sin, of Satan, and of hell—in growing anticipation of what He was taking upon Himself in His dying, cries out in the very words inspired by the Holy Spirit in Psalm 22 as Matthew records them in his Gospel, chapter 27, verse 46: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?***

**Jesus brings together, but in holy words spoken from a holy heart and soul, with a holy mind, by holy lips what sinners have desperately cried out in faith and in unbelief—why him, why her, why us, why me, O God? The sinner cries out in ignorance, in confusion, in despair, in fear, in anger, in blaming others and God.**

***Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Why is it you have sent me?*** [Moses] ***Why did the Lord bring us up out of Egypt, that we might die in the desert?*** [the Israelites complaining to Moses] ***I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty; why?*** [Naomi, after the deaths of her husband and two sons, and other losses] ***Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb?*** [Job, after the loss of all his wealth, property, status, after the deaths of his entire family, every member, and the decline of his health to a point of despicability]**. . .and King David, king of the ‘whys,’ *Why do the nations rage? Why do You, Lord, stand far off and hide from me in times of trouble? Why do You not help me? Why are you cast down, O my soul; why are you disquieted within me? Why does Your anger, Lord, smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?***

**And these are only some of the Old Testament whys.**

**Asking why is only human, only natural. We will ask it, too. We all do. God does not always answer our whys, but He does understand when we ask them and why we have to ask ‘why.’**

**Our answer may not be specific, particular, direct, and satisfactory to us in each situation in which our minds and hearts must ask it. But the answer has been given for all time in the moment when our Savior, as the GodMan, spoke it on our behalf on His cross, right before His death. Jesus was neither given an immediate answer, but He knew already the why of it. At 3:01 pm on Good Friday, His physical pain and mental/emotional anguish, and spiritual challenge was over. His peace had been earned by His obedience and perseverance. And the victory would be given as a gift to all who had believed, who believed then, and who came to believe in who He was and what He had accomplished.**

**Our whys simply transport us to the weekend we just celebrated, and at the foot of the cross and before the empty tomb, we have our answer. We stand in Him complete, and all the riddles that puzzle us here will fall into place when we follow Him in life, through the gate of death, to resurrection and eternal life. Then we shall have fully what we now have been given to believe and cling to—that all things work together for good in His purposes. ‘Alas’ will become ‘At last, Alleluia.’ All pain will become praise. Our blues will melt into ballads of joyful song.**

**Our question marks will straighten into exclamation points!**

[May God bless you and your loved ones on this Thursday]