



# Murderous Eyes

Midweek Lenten Service

Immanuel Lutheran Church

March 25, 2020

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## As We Gather

This Lent, we will use the metaphor of eyesight to examine how the various people in Mark's Gospel viewed Jesus during His Passion. In most cases, they misunderstood who He was and what He was doing; then again, sometimes by faith people did recognize Him correctly.

We have these forty days of Lent in which we may look within ourselves as people of faith in our day. How are we like or unlike the people who saw Jesus in the flesh? Most important, as we gather for worship, we will see what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death.

Today, we take a look at the chief priests and scribes, who saw Jesus as an obstacle to be rid of by violence. Yet, during the Passover festival, they would unwittingly bring about the sacrifice of the ultimate Passover Lamb. How, then, should we view those who oppose the Gospel in our day? And how might these insights guide our prayers?

### Invocation:

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

### Opening Sentences *Psalm 121:1–2; 145:15–16; 17:8; 25:15; Job 19:25–27*

- P** I lift up my eyes to the hills.  
From where does my help come?
- C** **My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 121:1–2***
  
- P** The eyes of all look to You,  
and You give them their food in due season.
- C** **You open Your hand;  
You satisfy the desire of every living thing. *Psalm 145:15–16***
  
- P** Keep me as the apple of Your eye;

**C** hide me in the shadow of Your wings. *Psalm 17:8*

**P** My eyes are ever toward the LORD,

**C** for He will pluck my feet out of the net. *Psalm 25:15*

**P** For I know that my Redeemer lives,

**C** and at the last He will stand upon the earth.

**P** And after my skin has been thus destroyed,

**C** yet in my flesh I shall see God,

**P** whom I shall see for myself,

**C** and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

My heart faints within me! *Job 19:25–27*

## Confession

**P** As we perceive how the people around Jesus were unable to truly see Him, let us confess our own failures to respond to His grace and mercy.

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

**A** The disciples misjudged the good deed of the woman who anointed Jesus,

**C** and we have failed to see that He is pleased with the loving service of His followers.

**A** Judas betrayed Jesus out of fear and for financial gain,

**C** and we have betrayed our weak faith in Him when making difficult decisions.

**A** Jesus' closest disciples gave in to sleep rather than watching and praying,

**C** and we have preferred physical comfort over spiritual turmoil.

**A** Peter failed to keep his bold promise of faithfulness to save his skin,

**C** and we have let Sunday's strength fade when Monday morning dawned.

- A** Jesus fulfilled the promise of salvation, even as His opponents sought to be rid of Him,
- C** **and He went to the cross because of our sins as well.**
- A** Pilate wanted to keep his political position, the soldiers saw only a weak man on the cross,
- C** **and we have let ourselves be deceived by the world's definition of success.**
- A** Jesus' body and blood are not visible in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper,
- C** **and we have not always looked beyond what our eyes can see in the Sacrament.**
- A** His Father forsook Jesus on the cross as He took all the punishment we deserve,
- C** **and we have, at times, focused on our best efforts instead of fixing our eyes on Jesus.**
- A** Jesus' followers didn't understand before Easter that He was only resting temporarily,
- C** **and we have not always looked beyond our physical health or longevity.**
- A** The angel proclaimed Jesus' resurrection to the women,
- C** **and we pray that You, heavenly Father, will forgive us all our sins for Jesus' sake. Help us fix our eyes on Jesus each day until we follow Him to our eternal home, where we shall see You face to face.**

## Forgiveness

- P** "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides [the Lord], who acts for those who wait for Him" (*Isaiah 64:4*). As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** **Amen.**

**Psalmody** *Psalm 10:1–12; antiphon: v.12*

**L** The psalm tells of the wicked intentions of evil adversaries and asks God for help.

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the afflicted.

Why, O LORD, do You stand far away?

**C** **Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?**

**L** In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;

**C** **let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.**

**L** For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul,

**C** **and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord.**

**L** In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek Him;

**C** **all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”**

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the afflicted.

**L** His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are on high, out of his sight;

**C** **as for all his foes, he puffs at them.**

**L** He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved;

**C** **throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”**

**L** His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;

**C** **under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.**

**L** He sits in ambush in the villages;

**C** **in hiding places he murders the innocent.**

**L** His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;

**C** **he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;**

- L** he lurks that he may seize the poor;  
**C** he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.
- L** The helpless are crushed, sink down,  
**C** and fall by his might.
- L** He says in his heart, “God has forgotten,  
**C** He has hidden His face, He will never see it.”  
 Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up Your hand; forget not the afflicted.

### First Reading *Job 24:13–17*

- L** Job notes how those who are evil seek to hide in darkness.

A reading from the 24th chapter of Job.

- <sup>13</sup>“There are those who rebel against the light,  
 who are not acquainted with its ways,  
 and do not stay in its paths.  
<sup>14</sup>The murderer rises before it is light,  
 that he may kill the poor and needy,  
 and in the night he is like a thief.  
<sup>15</sup>The eye of the adulterer also waits for the twilight,  
 saying, ‘No eye will see me’;  
 and he veils his face.  
<sup>16</sup>In the dark they dig through houses;  
 by day they shut themselves up;  
 they do not know the light.  
<sup>17</sup>For deep darkness is morning to all of them;  
 for they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.

- L** O Lord, have mercy on us.  
**C** Thanks be to God.

### Second Reading *1 John 3:11–15*

- L** John writes that love is essential for those who have heard the Gospel.

A reading from the third chapter of John’s First Letter.

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

**L** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** Thanks be to God.

### Third Reading *Matthew 23:29–36*

**L** Jesus condemns those who persecuted the prophets before Him.

A reading from the 23rd chapter of Matthew.

<sup>29</sup>“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, <sup>30</sup>saying, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ <sup>31</sup>Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. <sup>32</sup>Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. <sup>33</sup>You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell? <sup>34</sup>Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, <sup>35</sup>so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of innocent Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. <sup>36</sup>Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

**L** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## Passion *Mark 14:1, 53–65*

**P** This Lent, we are looking at the events of our Lord’s Passion through the eyes of some of the people who witnessed it. Today, we read the words of the people who unwittingly called for Jesus’ death, the sacrifice for all sin.

The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Mark, the 14th chapter.

It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest [Jesus] by stealth and kill Him. . . .

And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. And Peter had followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but they found none. For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimony did not agree. And some stood up and bore false witness against Him, saying,

**C** **We heard Him say, “I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.”**

**P** Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have You no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against You?” But He remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked Him, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?”

**A** I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.

**P** And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? You have heard His blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned Him as deserving death. And some began to spit on Him and to cover His face and to strike Him, saying to Him,

**C** **Prophecy!**

**P** And the guards received Him with blows.

O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

**P** Hymn 453 admits that Christ had to die not just for the sins of the scribes and Pharisees but for ours as well.

**Hymn** 425 *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*

**Sermon** *Murderous Eyes*

## Salutation

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

## Prayer of the Church

**P** Let us pray for the Church around the world, ourselves, and all people in their various needs.

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due season. *Psalm 145:15*

For farmers and ranchers and those who bring food to market, that God would provide favorable weather, bountiful harvests, and relief from both drought and flood, let us pray to the Lord.

**C** **Look on them all in Your mercy, heavenly Father.**

**P** My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He will pluck my feet out of the net. *Psalm 25:15*

For all who struggle with unemployment or underemployment, with poor living conditions or displacement from home, with personal demons or ill health, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Behold their turmoil, Lord Jesus, and grant them relief and hope.**

**P** His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. *Psalm 97:4*

For all people in authority over communities and countries, all whose decisions affect the climate of the planet and the health of its inhabitants, and all who are charged to maintain justice within their borders and peace among nations, let us pray to the Lord.

**C Gaze upon Your servants, O Lord; protect and guide them that they may serve with wisdom, compassion, and courage.**

**P** I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD. *Psalm 121:1–2a*

For all who serve the Lord as they care for others—medical personnel and first responders, counselors and advisers, friends and neighbors, professionals and volunteers—let us pray to the Lord.

**C Observe how they use the gifts You have given them, O Holy Spirit, and open doors of opportunity for them so that many may rejoice together.**

**P** Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings. *Psalm 17:8*

For the Church around the world, as clergy and lay leaders seek to proclaim the Gospel and faithfully endeavor to share their faith, especially in the face of persecution, let us pray to the Lord.

**C See their struggle, O Holy Spirit, and give them strength to persevere and grow.**

**P** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! *Psalm 34:8*

For the Church, wherever it gathers around Word and Sacrament, relying on God's steadfast love and faithfulness, and looking forward to the fulfillment of all His gracious promises, let us pray to the Lord.

**C** **Watch over Your Church, Lord Jesus; protect and defend us until that day we see You face to face.**

**P** Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

**P** Let us pray. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul.

**C** **Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience;**

**P** through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

## Prayer for Peace

**P** Let us pray. O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works,

**C** **give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness;**

**P** through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

## Lord's Prayer

**C** 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.

## Benediction

**P** The blessing of almighty God—the Father, who saw mankind's hopeless condition, the ✠ Son, who showed the depth of God's love, and the Holy Spirit, who has opened our eyes of faith in Christ—be upon you now and forever.

**C** Amen.

**P** After thanking our Lord for all He has done, stanzas 4 and 5 of this hymn invite everyone to look to Jesus and see all our sins laid on Him, the Lamb of God.

## Hymn *571 God Loved the World So That He Gave*

## Dismissal

**P** Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

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