

Saint Peter Lutheran Church
April 10, 2020 • Good Friday
Service and Sermon notes
Pastor Jack Kelly

*He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.* - Isaiah 49:2

During Lent our eyes have focused on the cross of Jesus Christ. The Crucified is lifted up, helplessly hanging and dying on the tree between heaven and earth. But his hanging on the cross, His defeat, is His victory. Through it He established His royal rule over all nations. So from the mouth of the suffering Savior comes the sword of his victorious word. His seven words from the cross reveal this victory. This Lent our look at the seven words from the cross has shown us Christ the Victor, who makes us victors in the face of defeat. This Good Friday we consider the *seventh* word from the cross: *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.*

THE WORD

Prayer of the Day

God Most Holy, look with mercy on this your family for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, be given over into the hands of the wicked, and suffer death upon the cross. Keep us always faithful to him, our only Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 52:13—53:12

¹³ See, my servant will act wisely;
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.
¹⁴ *Just as there were many who were appalled at him—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man
and his form marred beyond human likeness—*
¹⁵ so will he sprinkle many nations,
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.
53 *Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?*
² He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
³ *He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering.
Like one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*
⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,

yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
⁵ *But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.*

⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ *He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before her shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
And who can speak of his descendants?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

⁹ *He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.*

¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him
to suffer,

and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

¹¹ *After the suffering of his soul,
he will see the light of life and be satisfied;
by his knowledge my righteous
servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.*

¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Sermon Text: Luke 23:44-46

*It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came
over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun
stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn
in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into
your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this,
he breathed his last.*

Sermon Theme: Victorious Trust

Sermon summary:

*He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.* - Isaiah 49:2

Believers in Christ the crucified:

In Jesus Christ alone there is victory. Yet, when
we look at our Savior helpless and dying on the

cross, we sense defeat. Can victory be found in a cross? Yes, but we have to close our eyes and listen to Jesus' words from the cross. That is what we have been doing this Lent. From the mouth of the suffering Savior comes the sword of his victorious word. His seven words from the cross reveal this victory. This Lent our look at the seven words from the cross has shown us Christ the Victor, who makes us victors in the face of defeat.

On Ash Wednesday Pastor Heise showed us *victorious forgiveness* found in Jesus prayer to his heavenly Father. We saw *victorious comfort* given to the dying malefactor. Victorious protection was given to Mary when Jesus entrusted her care to John. Professor Schmoller opened our eyes to see that Christ being forsaken brought us *victorious freedom* from God's wrath—we will never be forsaken. As Jesus asks for a drink and relies on sinful pagans to get that drink he displays lowliness. But this is still victorious lowliness. And when Jesus says "It is finished!" he declared that a once-for-all *victorious payment* has been made for the guilt of your sins.

Jesus' final words from the cross are words that look back to the Old Testament hymnal we call the psalms. He quotes from Psalm 31:5: *Into your hands I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth.* These words were part of a customary Jewish evening prayer. "*Into your hands I commit my spirit.*" Stephen also spoke these words right before he died. And as I have ministered to the dying over the years I have known a number of people who spoke these words of Jesus as their own last words. They are beautiful words, but merely speaking these words on your deathbed do not guarantee that heaven's gates open for you when you breath your last. There has to be something behind those words that is real and genuine.

How can you entrust your spirit to a righteous God? He wants nothing to do with your death and mortality. He consumes weak and vile humans in his wrath. Listen to Paul describe what we are placing into God's hands when we die:

"There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ *there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.*

¹² *All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one."*^[b]

¹³ *"Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit."*^[c]

"The poison of vipers is on their lips."^[d]

¹⁴ *"Their mouths are full of cursing and*

bitterness."^[e]

¹⁵ *"Their feet are swift to shed blood;*

¹⁶ *ruin and misery mark their ways,*

¹⁷ *and the way of peace they do not know."*^[f]

¹⁸ *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*^[g] Rom 3:10-19

Do you think the God that lives in unapproachable light is going to sweep all that under the rug and welcome you with an eternal hug? No, the Lord will practice spiritual, eternal distancing when we entrust him with our vile, decaying lives. Don't even think of dying with empty words on your lips.

Today is Good Friday and we are fixed on Jesus' death. We cannot do justice to Good Friday without reminding ourselves how Jesus suffered on the cross, how he spoke these words, and how he died. *Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*—Jesus spoke these words in purest innocence. No deceit was found in his mouth; no selfishness in his motives. Jesus entrusts his spirit into his Father's hands because he offered his Father perfect trust, even as he suffered hell on the cross. His sixth word was an announcement that he had paid for all sin. His seventh word looked forward what comes next.

Jesus was about to be released from his role as substitute and sacrificial Lamb. Released from agony into glory. The "Light of the World" was eclipsed, but he is not extinguished. Jesus will be released from a cold, splintery cross to the warm, soft hands of His Father's paradise. Jesus was going back home. This he knew because of his righteous life, therefore he continued in unwavering trust in his Father. What was behind the seventh word that Jesus spoke on the cross. Victorious trust.

And what about you? What will be behind your words if you are able to make Jesus' words your own last words? You won't speak those words as an innocent human; you will speak them as a *redeemed* human, bought back by the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross. His life atoned for yours; his death brings victory to yours. What will be behind your final words?

*On my heart imprint your image,
Blessed Jesus King of grace,
That life's riches, cares, and pleasures
Have no pow'r to hide your face.
This the superscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my life my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation.*

...That's victorious trust. Amen.