



BENEATH THE CROSS

Week 4: From My Contrite Heart, With Tears

Wednesday, March 18th, 2026

2026 Midweek Lenten Service: Provided by the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING DIALOGUE (from Psalm 84): *Please stand as you are able.*

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven.

Happy are those in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away.

My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I confessed my transgressions to the Lord,

who forgave the guilt of my sin.

Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous.

Shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

GATHERING SONG:

Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me

ELW #623

GREETING

God who created all, who bore the cross, and who dwells in us, be with you all.

And also with you.

PRAYER

Let us pray. **God of our joy, you cleanse our hearts and renew our spirits. Have mercy on us according to your steadfast love, that we may sing aloud of your goodness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

READING: 1 John 1:5-10

A reading from first John.

⁵This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Here ends the reading.

GOSPEL: Luke 7:36-50

Please stand as you are able for the reading of the gospel.

Our gospel reading comes from the 7th chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

³⁶One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. ³⁷And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. ³⁸She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." ⁴⁰Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." ⁴¹"A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" ⁴³Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." ⁴⁴Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. ⁴⁵You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." ⁴⁸Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." ⁴⁹But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

The gospel of the Lord.

SILENT REFLECTION AND PRAYER

During this time, as you are comfortable, go to the table and take a piece of paper to write your prayers, burdens, etc. Take them to the cross and lay them, entrusting them into the care of Jesus.

REFLECTION

From the depths of our hearts we cry to God, confessing our sins. Even from the cross, Jesus cries, "Father, forgive them!" We are surrounded by grace, showered with the forgiveness and love of God shown to us on the cross.

PRAYERS

Let us pray. Beneath the cross of Jesus, **we lift up our joys and our sorrows to God.**

O Lord, amid the shifting sands of this world, **be our rock and our foundation.**

In the fears and uncertainties of our lives, **be our home and our resting place.**

When we lay our sins and burdens before you, **be our comfort and our guide.**

As we gaze upon the cross of Christ, **be our hope and our salvation.**

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us because you love us and want to save us.

By the power of the cross of Christ, you free us from sin to live each day for you.

We offer to you our burdens and prayer, entrusting them to Christ, who we trust will look upon them with compassion.

Bless + these crosses, signs of your glory, and let them remind us that Jesus died and rose for all. Help us to carry our cross, and to follow Jesus in serving others.

God of grace, you know what we need before we do, and we pray that you would show us clearly that you are among us. As our creator, make us a new creation. As our savior, make us right before you. As our guide, lead us to do your will in the world. Give us strength to journey with Jesus to the cross of salvation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERING

The peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

As the offering is collected, turn to your neighbor and share a word of peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Please stand as you are able.

Let us pray. **God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. We give you thanks for nourishing us in body, mind, and spirit, by the faith and fellowship we share. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

Let us pray. **We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.**

BLESSING

People of God, you have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer you who live, but it is Christ who lives in you. The peace of God (+), which surpasses all our human understanding, keep our hearts and our minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG:

Beneath the Cross of Jesus

ELW #338

DISMISSAL:

Go in peace, led by the cross of Christ. **C: Thanks be to God.**

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