

## **In Nomine Iesu**

### **Ash Wednesday - The Path of our Lord's Exodus: He is drawn to Gethsemane's garden – Luke 22:40-53**

“And when he came to the place, he said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And he withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.’ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow, and he said to them, ‘Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.’

“While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?’ And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said, ‘Lord, shall we strike with the sword? And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said, ‘No more of this!’ And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, ‘Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.’”

Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the second Adam. Dear fellow redeemed in Christ:

Jesus and His disciples had met in the garden of Gethsemane many times. Clearly, the garden had a special significance for Him and for them. On the evening of His betrayal, Jesus was drawn to the garden once more. He was not forced down the path to the garden as He would be forced every step of the way hereafter. No, there in the upper room, after He celebrated the Passover with His disciples for the last time, after He had instituted the sacrament of the New Testament, and after He had sung a hymn with His disciples – don’t you wonder which one it was? – He went out into the night. He went willingly, bringing the eleven disciples with Him to the garden they all knew well, so they could be witnesses of what would happen there this night. Even the twelfth disciple, who had already made his own arrangements, and who had already left the upper room and gone out into not just the night, but into darkness itself, planned to meet Jesus there.

Tonight, we begin our Lenten series entitled “The Path of our Lord’s Exodus.” It is based on the Evangelist Luke’s account of Jesus’ transfiguration on the mountain, and, especially, His conversation with Moses and Elijah. Moses was a picture of the coming Messiah. Elijah was the voice crying out in the wilderness of faithless Israel to prepare the way of the Messiah more than 800 years before He appeared, and thus foreshadowed John the Baptist. In their conversation they talked about the

**exodus** that Jesus would soon accomplish in Jerusalem. Jesus' exodus would begin not in far off Egypt, but in the very heart of the promised land, right in the valley below the City of David, below Solomon's temple, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The exodus would begin when, after Jesus prayed – three times! – that this cup of suffering be taken from Him, if the Father were willing. But each time the Father's answer was: No. So, when the temple guards and servants of the high priest came for Him with torches, clubs, and swords, He did not resist. Instead, He said to those who came to arrest Him and drag Him away to judgment, suffering, and death, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." With those words, the Father gave His beloved Son over to the Devil, to the Accuser, and Jesus would do as He had told His disciples in His very first sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. He would practice exactly what He preached, "**Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.**" (Matthew 5:25-26) But here Jesus' purpose was not to escape punishment. His purpose was the very opposite; it was to receive punishment, to pay every last penny to the guard, every last penny the guard of hell's prison was due by all the world's debtors.

You see, just as God instituted baptism for the forgiveness of sins, whose promise of forgiveness, life, and salvation drew thousands from "Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan" to John; (Matthew 3:5) and later was opened to "all the nations of the earth," (Matthew 28:19) **for the Lamb of God**, the Messiah, baptism became the water of guilt, sin, and death. That is why John the Baptist pointed to Him after His baptism, saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29) We will see in our Lenten series how, at the very beginning of His earthly ministry, Jesus took on Himself our sin and guilt in baptism that now as the end of His earthly ministry approached, He, the Bearer of our sin, would willingly let the accuser, Satan, hand Him over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, so that he would pay every last penny of our debt.

Here Jesus, the second Adam, would confront the very first of the world's liars, the father of lies, who led mankind into this mess in which we all find ourselves. He, the Father's perfect Son, would stand in Adam's place – for us! – and, instead of making excuses before His Father, pointing the finger of blame elsewhere, accept total responsibility for Adam's sin, and Eve's, and Cain's, and for all the sins of all the children of men who followed in the path of their fallen parents. He took what is ours in His baptism, now makes no excuse, but quickly accepts the responsibility for it ... and all that goes with it. He would be judged in our place for our sins. And so, His exodus, which would lead us out of death to life, begins.

As we continue to follow the path of our Lord's exodus, let us understand it in the same way we have seen in the case of baptism and Jesus' counsel to us regarding the accuser, judge, and guard. What looks ominous, terrible, and sad to us, God intended for our good. He knew that it would cost His only begotten Son dearly. But this is the way of the God of grace and mercy. This is the way of God, a way we would never have imagined. It is as Joseph once said to his guilty and fearful brothers about their casting him into a pit and selling him into slavery, "Do not

fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but **God meant it for good**, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.” (Genesis 50:19-21)

Week by week we will accompany Jesus along the path of His exodus. The end of which will lead back to the garden, and the tomb that waited there. The exodus He would accomplish is an exodus far greater than that of Moses’ leading Israel out of bondage in Egypt to the promised land of Canaan. Our Lord’s was an exodus that would lead us into life everlasting, an exodus that all the Old Testament prophets focused on, spoke of, reiterated to, and promised to, God’s chosen people, so that they would live in hope, waiting for the fulfillment of God’s promise.

So, let us go on from here, following our Lord’s footsteps along the way, seeing in His every step our salvation being accomplished by Him! Join us next week as we see Him “brought to Caiaphas’ residence.” Amen.

**Soli Deo Gloria**