

MIDWEEK OF LENT 4

BARABBAS

AS WE GATHER

Barabbas was a heartless, brutal criminal with anger in his heart and blood on his hands. Custom dictated that Pontius Pilate should release one prisoner at the feast of Passover. Pilate knows Jesus is innocent and tries to get the crowd to ask for Jesus' release, but the crowd calls instead for Barabbas. The crowd condemns the innocent Jesus and demands that the guilty Barabbas receive a pardon. We are Barabbas. We are guilty and sinful and deserving of death. But we are also Barabbas in that Jesus takes our place, takes our punishment, and sets us free.

HYMN

“My Song Is Love Unknown” (*LSB* 430)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

- P** As we continue our Lenten journey, we watch as Jesus stands trial before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate.
- C** **Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent.**
- P** Pilate tries to set Jesus free,
- C** **but the people call for a thief and murderer named Barabbas.**
- P** Though Barabbas is guilty, he is set free.
- C** **Though Jesus is innocent, He is condemned to die.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** We are like Barabbas. We are guilty. We all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The wages of sin is death. Still, our heavenly Father invites us to return to Him and seek His forgiveness.
- C** **Heavenly Father, we have sinned against You and against our neighbors in our thoughts, words, and actions. We have rebelled against Your rule and reign. We know our guilt. We know we deserve the punishment of death. But we seek Your abundant mercy on account of Jesus.**
- P** Almighty God, in His mercy, has given His Son to die for you. Jesus stands in your place and takes the punishment for your sin. He endures death for you. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the

name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen. We are pardoned. We are set free because of Jesus.

PSALM

P Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD:

C that He looked down from His holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,

P to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die,

C that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD, and in Jerusalem His praise,

P when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

HYMN

“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness” (*LSB* 849)

OLD TESTAMENT READING

P The Old Testament Reading is from Zechariah, the ninth chapter.

¹¹As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

¹²Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;

today I declare that I will restore to you double.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE

P The Epistle is from Second Corinthians, the third chapter.

¹⁵Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighteenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

³³So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?” ³⁴Jesus answered, “Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about Me?” ³⁵Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You over to me. What have You done?” ³⁶Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.” ³⁷Then Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.” ³⁸Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?”

After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, “I find no guilt in Him. ³⁹But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to

you the King of the Jews?” ⁴⁰They cried out again, “Not this man, but Barabbas!” Now Barabbas was a robber.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN

“O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken” (*LSB* 439:1–5)

SERMON

OFFERING

HYMN

“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed” (*LSB* 437)

KYRIE

P Lord, have mercy.

C Christ, have mercy.

P Lord, have mercy.

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.**

PRAYERS

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

For all those who are incarcerated, that they might know the power of Your love that liberates them from enslavement to sin, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all those who are on the margins of society and often overlooked, for the homeless, the orphaned, the poor, and the friendless, that we might follow Your example and show compassion to those most in need, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all who are lonely, shut-in, separated from family, or struggling to make friends, that You might be present with them and

surround them with a loving community, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those who struggle to accept Your grace and mercy, that You might soften their hearts to know that Your word of forgiveness and freedom is sure and certain, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all those who have rejected You, wandering off on their own, that You might draw them to Yourself and show them Your love that the world cannot give, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all those who are ill, injured, recovering, or preparing for surgery, [*especially . . .*], to strengthen them with Your healing and patience through their afflictions, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P For all those who grieve the loss of loved ones [*especially . . .*], to comfort them in the sure and certain hope that death does not have the final word, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, 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; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

P Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C Amen.

HYMN

“Abide with Me” (*LSB* 878 vs. 1,6)