Fourth Friday in Lent - March 12, 2021

*Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Hebrews 12:1)*

LSB 440 – Jesus, Will I Ponder Now

(Verse 6 of this week’s hymn served as inspiration for today’s devotion.)

The difficulties of serving God abound in this world, but the Christian can always rejoice that their God is truly present with them. And yet, it is so easy at times to forget that the Savior is dwelling right within our temples of the Holy Spirit. Sin has the incredible ability to hinder and entangle our understanding of a real and present God. The weight of sin is so heavy that it makes us believe that we are alone, isolated, and detached from our God and neighbors.

But the Holy Spirit is stronger than this oppressive curse. The Spirit of God points us back to Jesus in the words of today’s song. The Holy Spirit moves us to ponder Jesus here and now. But mysteriously we are led to ponder Jesus on the cross, in His weakest moment. How can we become strong by pondering Jesus at his weakest?! Well beloved, it is because we see the Son of God bearing the heaviest burden in history, the sin of the whole world. We see God sacrificially giving up His life in love for His enemies. Oh, love how deep, how broad how high, beyond all thought or fantasy! And the love of Jesus Christ is powerful, pondering His love for you lifts the sin that entangles and hinders you.

Our faith in God is strengthened and renewed daily by pondering Jesus Christ. Christians daily train in the cross of Jesus Christ. We pray to Jesus that He would be present with us in this fight and help us bear heavy burdens and trials of suffering. We meditate daily on His words of truth, love, and peace to equip us with the words to speak that alone can defeat sin, death, and the power of the devil. We face temptation equipped with the armor of God to stand strong in the days of evil. And after every battle, the Christian goes right back to praying to Jesus, right back to meditating on His words, to become stronger for the next battle against temptation. In this way a disciplined Christian runs with perseverance, the race which God has set before them.

**Prayer**

Almighty God, in times of doubt we sink into the shadowy depths. Pull us out of darkness dearest Jesus and renew in our hearts a living faith. In times of struggle, we freeze and resist action that can make a difference. Put our pride on the shelf dearest Jesus and help us rejoice in our sufferings as the kingdom of heaven advents by our service. Jesus we will ponder now, that all of God’s grace may abound! Amen!

Rev. Eric T. Stacy – Grace Lutheran Chapel