

Mid-Week Lenten Service

March 4, 2026



Conversations at the Foot of the Cross

Pastor Erik Allen

Conversations at the Foot of the Cross
-- Pilate and His Wife, Procula --

Prelude

“Ah, Holy Jesus”

Allan Mahnke

Call to Worship

P Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone;

C **but if it does die, it bears much fruit.**

P If anyone serves me, he must follow me;

C **and where I am, there shall my servant be also;**

P If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

C **The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.**

Hymn

Ah, Holy Jesus
(vs 1-3)

ELW 349

**Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended
that we to judge thee have in hate pretended?
By foes derided, by thine own rejected,
O most afflicted.**

**Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
‘Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee;
I crucified thee.**

**Lo, the Good Shepherd for the sheep is offered;
the slave hath sinned, and the Son hath suffered;
for our atonement, while we nothing heeded,
God interceded.**

Psalm 14

P Fools say in their hearts, “There is no God.”

C **They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is no one who does good.**

- P The LORD looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God.
- C **They have all gone astray, they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one.**
- P Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the LORD?
- C **There they shall be in great terror, for God is with the company of the righteous.**
- P You would confound the plans of the poor, but the LORD is their refuge.
- C **O that deliverance for Israel would come from Zion! When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, Jacob will rejoice; Israel will be glad.**

Reading

Luke 23:1-24

Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this man inciting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” Then Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He answered, “You say so.” Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no basis for an accusation against this man.” But they were insistent and said, “He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.”

When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by vehemently accusing him. Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people, and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for

he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.”

Then they all shouted out together, “Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!” (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city and for murder.) Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, but they kept shouting, “Crucify, crucify him!” A third time he said to them, “Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.” But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified, and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted.

Hymn

The Voices of the Passion

Tune: “O Sacred Head Now Wounded”

**The voices of the Passion,
Those words from ancient days--
What message do they fashion
As on your cross I gaze?
In words that once were spoken,
In speech now overheard,
Grant me, O Lord, this token:
To hear your living Word!**

Overheard: Pilate and Procula

David & Liz Lichtenberger

The Voices of the Passion

Tune: “O Sacred Head Now Wounded”

**Oh, wash my hands, Lord Jesus,
And purify my soul;
That I may do what pleases,
My conscience, Lord, control.
O true and righteous Savior,
O Witness bold and true,
Make it my sole endeavor
Your will to know and do.**

Prayers

- P On what can we rely, O Lord, except your mercy and your grace?
- C **We cannot trust ourselves, our own powers or will or the wishes of our hearts, for we are weak and sinful and powerless without your gracious aid.**
- P Do not enter into judgment with your servants, for in your sight no one shall stand.
- C **But send your Holy Spirit on us all, we pray, to convict us of our sin and to convince us of your righteousness--righteousness made freely ours through Christ who went the way of bitter, painful death that we might stand and walk righteous before you.**
- P Show us, then, the way to walk ... the thing to do ... the word to speak ... the example to follow, and to be.
- C **And when your way for us is hard, O God, make us firm in our resolve, and true in our response, faithful in the doing of your loving will.**
- P Through him who kept your will, unbent and true, for us; in whose strong name we pray:
- C **Our Father ...**

Benediction

- P: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
- C: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow
(vs. 1, 2 & 4)

ELW 327

**Through the night of doubt and sorrow,
onward goes the pilgrim band,
singing songs of expectation,
marching to the promised land.**

**Clear before us through the darkness
gleams and burns the guiding light;
pilgrim clasps the hand of pilgrim
stepping fearless through the night.**

**One the light of God's own presence
on the ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror,
bright'ning all the path we tread.
One the object of our journey,
one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward,
one the hope our God inspires.**

**Onward, therefore, sisters, brothers;
onward, with the cross our aid.
Bear its shame, and fight its battle
till we rest beneath its shade.
Soon shall come the great awak'ning;
soon the rending of the tomb!
Then the scatt'ring of all shadows,
and the end of toil and gloom.**

Postlude

“Through the Night of Dark and Sorrow”

K. Hildebrand

*Special thanks to Liz and David Lichtenberger
for participating in this evening's worship*

