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On My Heart Imprint

Your Image



Lenten Devotions

March 5 - 10

On my heart imprint Your image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares and pleasures
Never may Your work erase;
Let the clear inscription be:
Jesus crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
And my glory and salvation!

Lutheran Service Book 422

Thirty Pieces of Silver by Rev. Charles St-Onge

The Passover Lamb by Rev. Chris Truelsen

Darkness over the Land by Rev. William G. Sabol

Stripping the Altar by Rev. Chris Truelsen

Mourning Women by Rev. David Tannahill

The Seamless Garment by Rev. Chris Truelsen

March 5

THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Read Matthew 27:3-10



Thirty pieces of silver was the price to be paid for the death of someone else's slave by your ox. It was the amount prophetically offered to Zechariah for his work as a shepherd, an amount the Lord tells him to throw to the potter in the House of the Lord. In so doing, the Lord prophetically broke His relationship with wayward Israel. It is only fitting that this would be the amount offered up for the betrayal of the Son of Man who becomes a slave for our sakes, for the Shepherd who by the sheep is slain.

As is so often the case in prophecy, the players in the drama do not realize the real roles they are playing until after the fact. It is doubtful that the Jewish authorities, purchasing the Potter's Field with this blood money, understand how they are fulfilling the words recorded by Zechariah. If Judas has truly understood what was happening in Jesus' death, he might have repented and received salvation. It seems unlikely that Judas consciously chose Satan over the Lord. Yet this is the way of things: the Lord sees all and we see only by His Spirit, if we see anything at all.

The hit movie of a few years ago, *The Martian*, prized one man's life over the lives of countless others. My wife commented that it seemed odd that, in our culture that seems to view so many lives so cheaply, we would appreciate a film that values one life so highly. But this is also human nature. One moment we are risking everything to save one person. The next we are selling whole nations for thirty pieces of silver.

Praise be to God, who purchased every life on earth from sin, not with gold or silver, but with Christ's holy and precious blood.

By Rev. Charles St-Onge

WE PRAY

Lord, help us to value all human life more highly than any amount of silver or gold. Amen.

March 10

THE SEAMLESS GARMENT

Read Psalm 22:18



We enter this world with nothing and leave with nothing. Jesus was still alive on the cross, yet all His possessions were stripped from Him. Those who were executed did not even have the dignity of being covered in any way.

Christ's tunic was seamless. In biblical accounts, seemingly unimportant details really mean something. In this instance, a seamless garment would not be easily divided among the soldiers. Such a nice item of plunder couldn't be ripped to shreds and divided up. The best thing to do would be to cast lots for it and give it to the lucky winner.

As they were doing such a crass thing, little did they know they were busy fulfilling the words of a prophecy from Psalm 22 about the Lord. It was all prophesied that those who crucified the Lord would gamble for His clothing.

Just recently, a few strands of George Washington's hair were found, a significant historical treasure by our standards. A DNA test might be able to conclusively show whether they were his or not. When it comes to authenticating the Savior's credentials, prophecy after prophecy of Old Testament Scripture is fulfilled in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fulfillment after fulfillment is amazing authentication that the Savior promised by God for us, who came to take away the sins of the world, is really and truly the Savior, and not one of the world's many impostors.

At a time when we can no longer do anything about it, someone will go through all our treasures. I would like to think we'd gladly forfeit them all for the eternal life to come with our Lord Jesus.

By Rev. Chris Truelsen

WE PRAY

Dear Lord, Your possessions were taken. Someday we will go where we cannot take ours. Jesus, help us to treasure You most. Amen.

February 23

MOURNING WOMEN

Read Luke 23:27



It would have been difficult not to weep that day. To see our Savior beaten, bloodied and exhausted would have been too much to bear. It's not surprising that tears are still shed today whenever we hear this text read during the Lenten season.

In some churches the service is cast in such a way as to evoke a deep and wrenching emotional experience. The sounds of hammer and nails are heard out of sight to make it more vivid. The tears that run down the faces of those worshipping become the goal of the service.

When the women wept for Jesus, He told them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your children" (Lk 23:28). As a result of our sin, death and judgment have come upon the world. Tears shed should be tears of sorrow for ourselves and what we have done.

However, in repentance and faith we can look up and see what Jesus came to accomplish on our behalf. Here is Jesus, as we confess, "who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven." His suffering and death have brought us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

These events in our Savior's passion were not written with the purpose of prompting pity. They were written that we may have the pardon and peace He came to bring. You can be assured of it. God comforts you and affirms in His Word that "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:31). And with this salvation God Himself shall wipe away our tears.

By Rev. David Tannahill

WE PRAY

Thank You, dear Savior, for taking all of my sorrows and giving me Your joy. Amen.

March 6

PASSOVER LAMB

Read Exodus 12:7



Years ago a representative of Jews for Jesus came to my home congregation. He had come to speak about the significance of the Passover. One of the points he brought out was the pattern of the blood on the doorposts and on the lintel of the houses.

The promise made was that if the children of Israel placed the blood on the doorposts and the lintels of their houses that the final plague would pass over them, God striking down the firstborn throughout the land of Egypt.

What pattern does the blood make? If you make the sign of the cross, that is the pattern that the blood makes on the doorposts and the lintel, the horizontal of the cross represented on the doorposts, the vertical of the cross completed with the blood dripping down from the lintel.

In Egypt, the blood of the lamb covered the children of Israel, preserving their firstborn from death. The sign of the cross signaled to God to pass over them. It is no mistake that Jesus is the "lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." Jesus is *our* Passover lamb.

Jesus our Passover lamb poured out His life-blood for us, the wood of the doorposts and lintel now become the wood of the cross. Now the water of baptism and the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, mark you as one to be passed over so that you may live and enter God's heavenly kingdom. You are now marked for salvation.

By Rev. Chris Truelsen

WE PRAY

Lord Heavenly Father, thank You for the gracious gift of salvation through Your Son Jesus. Thank You for covering me with salvation through His death on the cross. Thank You for giving Him as my Passover lamb. Amen.

March 7

DARKNESS OVER THE LAND

Read Matthew 27:45

Light blazed across the cosmos; the Word of God echoed in the void and darkness. From nothing, came everything. In the womb of a young virgin, the Light took on flesh and dwelt among us. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." (Jn 1:4) As Jesus stood on the mount by Moses and Elijah, His glory was revealed in His transfiguration; He shone like the sun (Mt 17:2). In the age to come, there will be no need for the sun, for Jesus, Himself, will be the source of the light (Rev. 21:23). God is light, in Him there is no darkness.

Darkness, so deep that it could be felt, covered the land of Egypt in the penultimate plague upon Egypt. Darkness of night greeted Judas, as he left the upper room to commit the ultimate betrayal. Darkness is the way of the wicked, who cannot even see that which causes them to stumble.

The Word of God was being silenced on the cross of Calvary. The Light of the World dimmed, and darkness covered the entire earth for three hours. The final Word was spoken: "It is finished." And the light went out.

"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened." (Mt 24:22)

Darkness covered land, a tomb was sealed, soldiers stood guard. "For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you" (Is 60:2a). The darkness of the night was broken, not by the sun, but by an angel descending from the heavens, glowing as lightning. The stone is rolled away. The Light of the World blazes forth, banishing the darkness forever.

By Rev. William G. Sabol



March 8

STRIPPING THE ALTAR

Read Mark 15:24

It would be a most humiliating thing to be in the open, exposed, without any clothes. That was the state of the created Adam and Eve, and it was nothing to them before the Fall; there was no shame in it. When they fell into sin, they realized that they were naked and sewed together leaves to make a covering. Their nakedness was now shameful. What did God do? He covered them. It was the first sacrifice, as animals shed their blood to cover Adam and Eve's shame.

The human race is still wearing clothes today; even where the Bible is not recognized, to be without clothes is to be indecent.

The stripping of the altar is to remind us of how our Lord was stripped of His dignity. The punishment of the cross was terrible and torturous, and on top of it, humiliating.

Everything was taken from Him, even His clothes. We dignify the event by covering Jesus in our art, and in our depictions of what happened.

But an innocent man was scandalously crucified nakedly upon the cross, not given the dignity of being covered. It was the fate of a criminal, of someone sentenced to a shameful death. Few people would be less than horrified at such indignity.

When we sin, when it is discovered, or when we recognize it for what it is, we still want it covered up. That is why God sent His Son Jesus Christ; the death He died on the cross was to cover all our sin. His blood, shed for us, covers our shame and takes away the punishment for sin originally given at the Fall—death.

By Rev. Chris Truelsen

WE PRAY

When we seem in vain to pray and our hope seems far away, in the darkness be our stay: Hear us, holy Jesus. Amen. (LSB 447:11)

WE PRAY

Lord Jesus, thank You for covering my sin with Your righteous, innocent blood. Thank You for covering the shame of my sin. Amen.