

*Lent was the time when candidates for Holy Baptism were intently preparing to be baptized at the Vigil of Easter. We, too, in this season of Lent prepare ourselves to remember our Baptism at Easter as we ritually “pass over” with Jesus from death to new life. During this Lenten season we remember Jesus’ Baptism, His anointing with the Holy Spirit, and His words in Luke 4: that He was anointed to show and to be mercy. As His people — hearing Him proclaim God’s Word and being God’s Word as Prophet; seeing Him sacrifice Himself on a cross and knowing that He intercedes for us as Priest; and knowing that we live under Him as King in righteousness and purity — we will be reminded of our work of mercy*

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**HYMN:** “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come: [LSB 358]

1 From heav’n above to earth I come,  
to bear good news to ev’ry home;  
glad tidings of great joy I bring  
whereof I now will say and sing:

3 ‘Tis Christ our God, who far on high  
had heard your sad and bitter cry;  
Himself will your Salvation be,  
Himself from sin will make you free.

4 He will on you the gifts bestow  
Prepared by God for all below,  
That in His kingdom bright and fair,  
You may with us His glory share.

13 Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Son,  
Who came to us to be the One,  
A quiet chamber set apart  
For you to dwell within my heart.

**INVOCATION:**

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Christ Jesus reigns as King in wisdom and grace. He offers and gives us freedom.

**People: He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. Amen.**

**OLD TESTAMENT Is. 42:1–9**

#### **The Lord’s Chosen Servant**

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law.

Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:

“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.”

*[After the reading]*

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Pastor: Set us free from our prison.

**People: Let us call upon You in righteousness.**

**CONFESSION** (based on Ps. 142) *Read responsively whole verse by whole verse.*

1 I cry out to the LORD with my voice; With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.

**2 I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.**

3 When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk They have secretly set a snare for me.

**4 Look on my right hand and see, For there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul.**

5 I cried out to You, O LORD: I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living.

**6 Attend to my cry, For I am brought very low; Deliver me from my persecutors, For they are stronger than I.**

7 Bring my soul out of prison, That I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, For You shall deal bountifully with me."

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and forever shall be, world without end. Amen**

Pastor: In Psalm 142, the Spirit encourages us to cry out to God because He is our refuge and the only one who can deliver us from those who hold us in bondage and captivity. With those thoughts in mind, together we humbly make our confession.

*(Silence for reflection and personal confession)*

Pastor: It is true, Father in heaven,

**People: we are in prisons, prisons of our making and those that have been built for us by enemies too powerful for us to control.**

Pastor: We sometimes put ourselves in the dungeon and lock the doors behind us,

**People: and sometimes we are captured because we have not walked Your path or followed Your way; and the snare was set, and we entered.**

Pastor: We have not always cried out to You for help,

**People: but we often complain to and about everyone else; and sometimes our complaint is that You have not done enough to free us.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, we have sinned against You and have acted foolishly.

**People: Father in heaven, we have sinned against You and our neighbor. We stand before You in need of forgiveness. Set us free from the prison that we have made and the one made for us by the evil one.**

Pastor: Forgive us for the sake of Jesus, the merciful anointed one.

**People: Amen.**

**ABSOLUTION (based on Luke 4)**

Pastor: Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Because our merciful Lord was anointed for mercy as Prophet who preaches freedom, as Priest who is the ransom that obtains freedom, and as King whose Kingdom is freedom — because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ, and by His authority, I, as a called and ordained minister of the Word, forgive you all your sin in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

**EPISTLE Acts 12:1–19 Acts 12 Herod’s Violence to the Church**

Pastor: Now about that time Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. 2 Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was during the Days of Unleavened Bread. 4 So when he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover. 5 Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were keeping the prison. 7 Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying,

**People: “Arise quickly!”**

Pastor: And his chains fell off his hands. 8 Then the angel said to him,

**People: “Gird yourself and tie on your sandals;” Pastor: and so he did. And he said to him, People: “Put on your garment and follow me.”**

Pastor: 9 So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said,

**People: “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectation of the Jewish people.”**

Pastor: 12 So, when he had considered this, he came to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 When she recognized Peter’s voice, because of her gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15 But they said to her,

**People: “You are beside yourself!”**

Pastor: Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said,

**People: “It is his angel.”**

Pastor: 16 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said,

**People: “Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren.”**

Pastor: And he departed and went to another place. 18 Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. 19 But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that they should be put to death.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL Luke 22:24–34**

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe

all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

**MESSAGE:**

**HYMN: 301** "Take My Life and Let it Be" *with no refrain.* Vs 1,3,5. [Melody - LSB: 783]

**OFFERING: Doxology**

**PRAYER:**

Pastor: Generous liberating Lord, You have blessed us richly with life and have provided all things we need to sustain it. You have freed from the captivity of sin, the jailhouse of the devil and the dungeon of death. Accept our gifts, and grant us humility to use our blessings wisely, honoring You and faithfully serving in Your kingdom. We pray in Your name, Lord Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Lord Jesus, we bring before You the foolishness and failures of our lives. When these keep us from honoring You,

**People: Bring my soul out of prison, That I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, For You shall deal bountifully with me."**

Pastor: When our own agendas lead us down a wayward path where snares and traps have been laid,

**People: Bring my soul out of prison,  
That I may praise Your name;  
The righteous shall surround me,  
For You shall deal bountifully with me."**

Pastor: When self-centeredness takes control of our hearts and puts us in a jailhouse of greed and envy,

**People: Bring my soul out of prison,  
That I may praise Your name;  
The righteous shall surround me,  
For You shall deal bountifully with me."**

Pastor: In Your wisdom, Lord Christ, guide our rulers in the way of justice and peace. Bless the imprisoned with visitors and pastors who comfort in Your name. Open the prison house of those who have been unjustly detained and return them to their families. Remember, O Lord, the faithful who languish in prison, and grant them to see their native land again. In Your mercy grant healing to those who are sick, comfort to those who grieve, and rest to those who are weary.

**People: We pray all of this in Your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Pastor: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**LORD'S PRAYER**

Pastor: The Lord Almighty — the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit — bless and preserve you, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN:** 151 "Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days" vs 1-5

Pastor: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God**