

Jesu Juva

“Love So Amazing, So Divine”

Text: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; John 19:17-30

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Yes, that is what this day is all about. The mercy of our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, *for you*. Every deed done, every word spoken by Jesus, filled and dripping with mercy. The mercy of God toward us sinners. The mercy that is ours because the wrath is given to Jesus. He is ***stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. He was wounded for your transgressions, and crushed for your iniquities. It was the will of the Lord to crush Him.*** To crush His only Son. For you. *For you.*

Why?

I will tell you the answer again, but it will be as mysterious now as it was before and has ever been: **because He loves you.** Not with the kind of love we mostly see in our world today. Love that is an emotion that comes and goes. Love that is really quite about selfishness. No, God’s love is so different than what we see in the world today that there really is only one way to describe it: *that He gave His Son for you.* That’s a circular argument, I know. But it’s the best we can do.

But let’s go a little deeper: *that’s true no matter who you are.* There have been some pretty bad characters in our world, in history. *And you?* Well, we like to think ourselves not so bad; pretty respectable in the grand scheme of things. Maybe we don’t deserve an A, but not an F either. *But really?* Think of what you’ve done this past week, or even just today. Think of the anger, the stubbornness, the pride, the refusal to repent, the lust, the despair, the selfishness . . . and more.

When a crowd (of those who I’m sure thought of themselves in much the same way we do) was ready to stone a woman caught in adultery, Jesus said to them: *Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her* (John 8:7). We should use that same standard today, when we are feeling superior; when we think ourselves and our sin not so bad. But to do so, let me paraphrase Jesus: let whoever among you who thinks he’s not as bad a sinner as someone else be the first to let your every sinful thought, every sinful word, every sinful dream, every sinful act, every sinful desire, every sinful little nugget of your life be broadcast for all the world to see. Who’d like to go first? Not me!

Let that broadcast flash through your mind for a moment . . . Now you are ready to pray: *Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.* On me, a sinner. On me, a wretch. On me, miserable me.

There was one there that day, though, who could have thrown a stone. He didn't because soon that stone would be hurled at Him. And all our stones, too. ***Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace. He was made sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.***

Hail *Jesus*, full of grace. Grace, for you. Mercy, for you. Love, for you.

Behold the life-giving cross, we said earlier tonight. That's an oxymoron, isn't it? Crosses didn't give life, they took life. Except for one. The one on which the perfect one died, the sinless one, the one who should not have died, but did. His death gives life because His death conquers death. Because in His death, ***Christ was reconciling the world to God.*** Christ was making things right again and providing the forgiveness of all sins. Every single one. Even all of yours.

So when you hear Jesus say tonight: *Father, forgive them*, that's you. When you hear: *Today you will be with me in Paradise*, you again. And when you hear: *It is finished*, that is the beginning of your life. For that is the completion of your salvation, your setting free from your slavery to sin, your slavery to the past, your slavery to past regrets and mistakes. So that at the end of the service tonight, we can sing: *Lord, let at last Your angels come, to Abram's bosom bear me home, that I may die unfearing* (LSB #708 v.3), because you know He will; you know they will; you know it's true. You will not die forsaken - because of Jesus, you will die with the angels of God on the ready to bear you home.

So tonight Jesus is glorified. He is not shamed - *man* is shamed. Look at what we've done! Look at what we've done to the Lord of life.

But tonight, Jesus is glorified. And glorifies you. The blood that flows from Him washing you clean, and the Spirit He breathes out in death breathing new life into you.

So look upon Him tonight, and in His death see your death. And then as we celebrate His resurrection, see in His life your life. A life that will never end.

Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend. And I will praise Thee without end (LSB #708 v.3).

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.