

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Lent 5 Mid-Week Service
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

“The Mob”

Psalm 22:1-18; Acts 2:36-41; Matthew 27:15-26

This Lenten Season, we have been focusing on the People of the Passion.

The Passion of Jesus Christ was all about people. Jesus suffered and died for people. You are the object of His Passion. Some of these same people for whom Jesus died had a hand in His suffering and death. All kinds of people were there.

On Ash Wednesday, we focused on the words of the hymn writer who asks, “Were you there when they crucified my Lord?” We talked about how that hymn is a brilliant use of *anamnesis*. The Greek word *anamnesis* literally means to remember. Yet, it is much more than simple mental recall of an event. It calls the

community to re-member the past into the present, to bring these historic events to bear in the now and make them part of our story.

“Were You There” is then an anamnetic song that is meant to bring the past events of Christ’s suffering and death into the present and remind us that our sins put Jesus on that cross just as much as the sins of Judas Iscariot, or Caiaphas, or even the Mob of people who were yelling “Crucify Him!”

We gather again this evening to ponder Jesus’ Passion, culminating in his death and his resurrection. We do so by looking closely at the people of the Passion. Again, we ask you to put yourself in their places. Were you there when they crucified my Lord? Were you there when the mob yelled “Crucify Him!”? Imagine that you are there—you are there playing a role in the passion of Jesus Christ. Your sin and mine – the sin of the crowd put Him there on that cross.

The crowd on Good Friday is not the first crowd Jesus encountered, nor will it be the last as the fulness of the story plays out. Jesus had healed the crowds,

fed the crowds 4000 or 5000 at a time. Jesus had been welcomed by the crowd on Palm Sunday to the shouts of "Hosanna in the highest!" On Good Friday, the crowd is shouting something very different.

The hymnwriter's question "Were you there?" forces us to remember forward these events and to acknowledge, even remember our sin as playing a role in the Passion of Christ our Lord. The prophet Jeremiah offers a different perspective on remembering our sin.

This was our Old Testament reading for this past Sunday. These words of God spoken through the prophet Jeremiah are one of the great promises in all of Scripture: "For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

We consider the mob of a crowd that shouted "Crucify Him!" and asked for Barabbas and then mocked and jeered at Him while He hung upon the cross. We heard the prophetic words of the Psalmist who describes these people as a

“company of evildoers” who have encircled Him and have pierced His hands and His feet.

Even for these people who called down curses upon themselves and said, “His blood be on us and on our children,” Jesus offers up a prayer to His Father: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Essentially: “Forgive them their iniquity and remember their sin no more.”

Throughout this Lenten season, we have acknowledged that our sin makes us as guilty as anyone in the Mob yelling “Crucify Him!” But we are also reminded that we are just as forgiven as anyone who stood at the foot of the cross in faith or in the empty tomb and witnessed our risen Lord.

Tonight, we come before our Lord, in faith, and we confess our sin, repent of our sin, and come before our crucified and risen Lord in full confidence that His promise is sure that He will not remember our iniquity, our guilt. He will remember our sins no more. Amen.