

Fourth Sunday in Lent

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Latin, 6th century, transl Robert Campbell, 1849

At the Lamb's high feast we sing,
Praise to our victorious King,
Who hath washed us in the tide
Flowing from His piercèd side;
Praise we Him, whose love divine
Gives His sacred blood for wine,
Gives His body for the feast,
Christ the Victim, Christ the Priest.

Where the Paschal blood is poured,
Death's dark angel sheaths his sword;
Israel's hosts triumphant go
Through the wave that drowns the foe.
Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed,
Paschal Victim, paschal Bread;
With sincerity and love
Eat we Manna from above.

Mighty Victim from the sky,
Hell's fierce powers beneath Thee lie;
Thou hast conquered in the fight,
Thou hast brought us life and light;
Hymns of glory and of praise,
Father, now to Thee we raise;
Risen Lord, all praise to Thee,
Ever with the Spirit be.

How quickly we forget the mercies of the Lord! The Israelites, rescued out of slavery in Egypt, are growing impatient in the desert. They grumble and complain; they turn from the Lord; and Moses intercedes on their behalf. In the same way, we grow impatient; we are short-sighted; though we have been set free, we fall back into sin. Not so with our God! In Exodus 34 He reveals Himself to Moses, declaring that He is, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty."

How can we, an unholy people, stand before a Holy God? Moses' face shone, reflecting God's glory, and the Israelites were afraid. We have a great High Priest, a greater Moses, Christ, who intercedes on our behalf. As it says in Isaiah 53, "He poured out His soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."

Monday

Exodus 34: 5-9, 27-35 (ESV)

The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation." And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."

And the LORD said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them. Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the LORD had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Tuesday

Almighty and most merciful God,
We acknowledge and confess that we have sinned against Thee in thought, word, and deed; that we have not loved Thee with all our heart and soul, with all our mind and strength; and that we have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. We beseech Thee, O God, to forgive what we have been, to help us amend what we are, and of Thy mercy to direct what we shall be; so that we may henceforth walk in the way of Thy commandments, and do those things which are pleasing in Thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

- *The Book of Common Worship*, 1946

Wednesday

Ah, Holy Jesus

Johann Heermann, 1630; transl Robert Seymour Bridges, 1897

Ah, holy Jesus, how hast Thou offended,
that man to judge Thee hath 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 heedeth,
God intercedeth.

For me, kind Jesus, was Thy incarnation,
Thy mortal sorrow, and Thy life's oblation;
Thy death of anguish and Thy bitter passion,
for my salvation.

Therefore, kind Jesus, since I cannot pay Thee,
I do adore Thee, and will ever pray Thee,
think on Thy pity and Thy love unswerving,
not my deserving.

Thursday

Numbers 21:4-9 (ESV)

From Mount Hor they [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Friday

Man of Sorrows- - What a Name

Philip P. Bliss, 1875

Man of Sorrows, what a name
for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
in my place condemned He stood,
sealed my pardon with His blood:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Guilty, vile, and helpless we;
spotless Lamb of God was He.
Full atonement, can it be?
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Lifted up was He to die;
"It is finished" was His cry;
now in heaven exalted high:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

When He comes, our glorious King,
all His ransomed home to bring,
then anew this song we'll sing:
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Saturday

Isaiah 53: 7- 12 (ESV)

He was oppressed, and He was afflicted,
yet He opened not His mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so He opened not His mouth.
By oppression and judgment He was taken away;
and as for His generation, who considered
that He was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of My people?
And they made His grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in His death,
although He had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in His mouth.
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him;
He has put Him to grief;
when His soul makes an offering for sin,
He shall see His offspring; He shall prolong His days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
Out of the anguish of His soul He shall see and be satisfied;
by His knowledge shall the Righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and He shall bear their iniquities.
Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the many,
and He shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because He poured out His soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet He bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Notes:
