

INI

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
2100 16<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Austin, MN 55912-1749  
Pastor Ted Barthels  
Sermon preached on  
March 16, 2022  
3<sup>rd</sup> Midweek Lent

Passion Lesson: Jesus Betrayed & Arrested

Responsive Reading: Psalm 41:1-2, 7-13

Hymns: 390; 148:1-5; 447; 554:5,6

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: 2 Corinthians 13:4

“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: False Impressions and perceptions about Christ abound.--

In our meditation this evening we are going to be considering how Jesus presented Himself to His enemies and willingly suffered and died. We are going to consider that from man's perspective as well as the Savior's own attitude toward others. Jesus' enemies falsely perceived Jesus as being weak because Jesus went forward to the cross, passively submitting to all that was done to Him. This truth is presented to us by Paul so that we might better understand how we as children of God may be perceived by the world when we follow Jesus' example in suffering, and His instruction for life in the world.

we see how Jesus was perceived, and how He really is!

**THEME: Christ Is Crucified in Weakness, Lives in Power.**

Indeed, Jesus was --

**I. Crucified in Weakness, but Powerful to Save.**

To save us from our sins Jesus chose not to exercise the power that was His as the Son of God. That was His choice, a choice that Jesus made in the greatness of His love for us sinners. Consider what we read in our Passion History Lesson this evening. Judas had led a mob of armed men out to the Mount of Olives, right to the Garden of Gethsemane, where Judas knew Jesus would be with His disciples. We are told that Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to Him, went to meet this band of armed men who meant Him harm. Jesus didn't say, "Here comes my betrayer; let's get out of here!" He went forward to meet them.

His enemies came in what they perceived to be strength. A large band of men all armed, some with swords others with clubs, carrying lanterns and torches so they could see in the darkness and better capture Jesus.

Jesus went out to meet them and asked, "*Whom are you seeking?*" And when they said, "*Jesus of Nazareth.*" Jesus didn't try to deceive them in the darkness and hide His identity. He declared, "*I am He!*" When Jesus said, "*I am He!*" the whole band of armed men went backward and fell to ground! **That** is the **power** the Word of God in the person of Jesus Christ! They all fell backward to the ground.

Jesus presented Himself in weakness. He asked again, and this band of evil men responded, "*Jesus of Nazareth,*" like nothing had happened, and again Jesus identified Himself and answered, "*If you are looking for Me, let these men go.*"

When Peter tried to resist, swinging his sword and managing to cut off a man's ear, Jesus stopped the resistance before Peter or anyone else might be further injured or killed. Jesus immediately reached out and touched His enemy's ear and healed him! Jesus used His power to heal His **enemy**. Jesus reminded everyone that He could summon many thousands of mighty angels to help Him, but then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled, and our salvation be secured.

Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested, to be led away, to be mocked and falsely accused, to be blindfolded and slapped and punched and spit upon. His enemies perceived this to be evidence of Jesus' weakness. Jesus was taken to Pilate and beaten by Pilate's soldiers and abused by Herod's soldiers, and Jesus endured scourging. And Jesus' arms were stretched out as He was nailed to cross. In all this Jesus' enemies and even His disciples saw weakness when in fact it was the power of God. We call this Jesus' passive obedience to the will of God. It was the will of His Father in heaven that Jesus endure the curse of sin and shed His

life blood as He suffered and died upon the cross. Yes, many saw it all as weakness, and they rejoiced in Jesus' weakness.

Later, much later, Peter would write by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *"When He was reviled, (He) did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; <sup>24</sup> who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed."* (1 Peter 2:23-24) Although it was perceived as weakness, this wasn't weakness except that Jesus allowed men to do as they desired. This was the power of God's love in the person of Jesus Christ, that He died for us to save us, and He rose again and lives in power forevermore.

In our text the Apostle Paul reminds us how we are --

## **II. Sharing in Jesus' Weakness to Live by the Power of God.**

We read in our text: *"For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you."* (2 Corinthians 13:4) The perception of the world, and maybe even some children of God is that disciples of Jesus Christ are weak. Paul doesn't argue with that, at least not in so far that as children of God we are following in the path Jesus has traveled before us. We don't assert ourselves for our own sake, not when it touches things spiritual, not when the world is attacking us for Jesus' name's sake.

Yes, the world may perceive faithful Christians to be weak, that is we may be seen as patsies for con jobs, easily taken advantage of. Others in the world may characterize us as being weak intellectually because we don't follow the false science of evolution and or the philosophy of humanism. Others characterize children of God as being weak when it comes to social values and adopting the views of this world regarding morality and spirituality. We may be characterized as "close-minded" or even bigoted and hateful! It would be easy to follow our own natural instincts and respond to name calling with name calling, or even be tempted to conform to the ways and thinking of this world, all just to prove that we aren't weak minded or of weak character.

The Lord shows us another way, a way that leans on Jesus for strength. Let's start with Peter's words from his first epistle. *"When you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps."* (1 Peter 2:20-21) What is weak according to the world is strength of faith, strength that comes from Christ and glorifies Christ.

Jesus taught us in His Sermon of the Mount:

*But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. <sup>40</sup> If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. <sup>41</sup> And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. <sup>42</sup> Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away. <sup>43</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ <sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” (Matthew 5:39-45)*

What the world deems as weakness is living as children of God in a sinful and corrupt world. The world expects us to respond to them in their ways, ways that they call strength. Our Father in heaven gives us the strength to follow in His ways, even if the world sees that as weak and pathetic.

Christ was crucified in weakness, and Christ lives in power. That is the power that comes to us as we look to the cross where Jesus gave Himself for us that we might have life in His name. The power of His life is the power of the gospel that brings life to our hearts and empowers us to live to His glory. We will gladly and willingly be called weak as we live in this world by the power of a living Savior.

**AMEN.**

And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.     **(Hymn 179)**