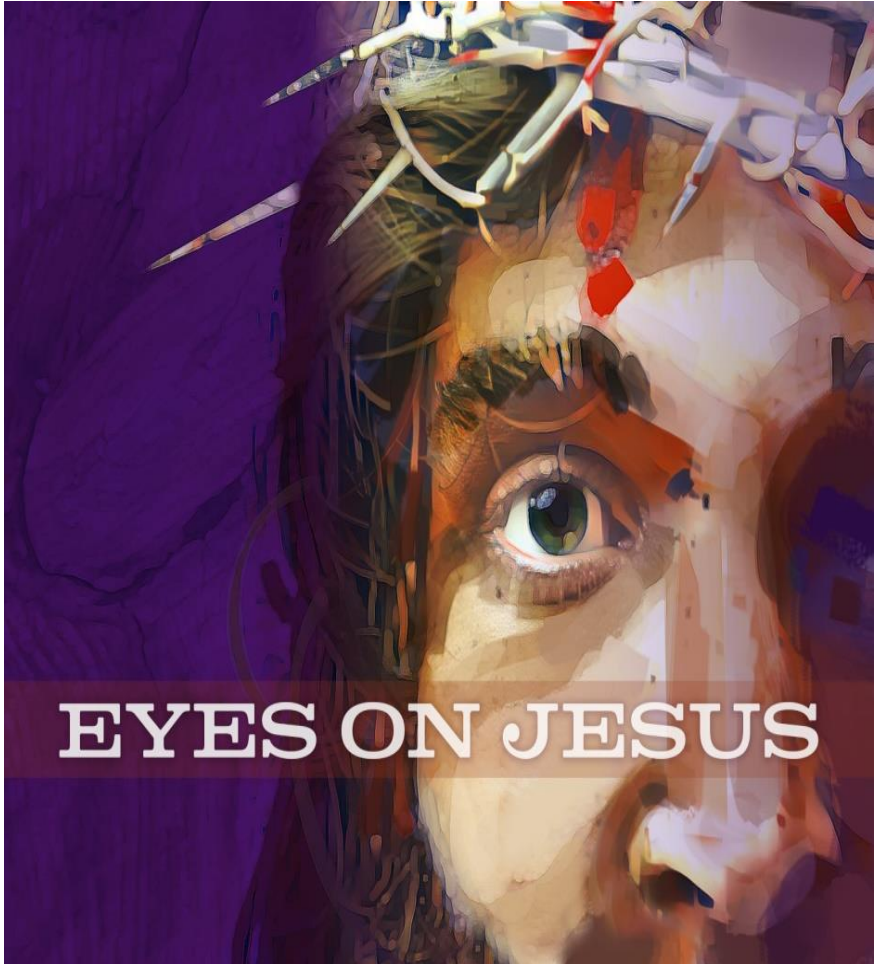


Midweek Lenten Service

March 10th, 2021 - 7 pm



*Faith Lutheran Church
310 Southdale Road East
London, ON N6E 1A1*

Denying Eyes

As We Gather

This Lent, we will use the metaphor of eyesight to examine how the various people in Mark's Gospel viewed Jesus during His Passion. In most cases, they misunderstood who He was and what He was doing; then again, sometimes by faith people did recognize Him correctly.

We have these forty days of Lent in which we may look within ourselves as people of faith in our day. How are we like or unlike the people who saw Jesus in the flesh? Most important, as we gather for worship, we will see what Jesus has done to save us from our sins by His holy, precious blood and innocent sufferings and death.

At first, Peter and the other disciples cannot see how they could ever fall away from Jesus. Then, when Peter is spotted by a servant girl and realizes that his own neck is on the line, he sees fit to deny Jesus, which leads to his weeping in remorse. What does it take for us to move beyond our own remorse to the discipleship we and our Lord desire?

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Hymn "Our Eyes Behold the Savior's Face"

- 1 Our eyes behold the Savior's face
And yet cannot perceive
That His perspective held our grace
Before we could believe.
- 2 Our focus flits and fails to see
The One whose steadfast gaze
Propelled Him to the darkened tree
Enveloped in death's haze.

- 3 Our sights train on the dreadful cross.
 Beneath His knowing eyes,
 Our sins are bare and set for loss;
 He sees us as His prize.
- 4 Our vision blurs with anxious tears
 As Jesus' eyelids fall
 To conquer sin and all our fears
 And tear in two our pall.
- 5 Our view scans for the coming Day
 That evermore grows near,
 When Jesus wipes our tears away
 And all is crystal clear.

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Opening Sentences *Psalm 121:1–2; 145:15–16; 17:8; 25:15; Job 19:25–27*

- P I lift up my eyes to the hills.
 From where does my help come?
- C **My help comes from the LORD,
 who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 121:1–2***
- P The eyes of all look to You,
 and You give them their food in due season.
- C **You open Your hand;
 You satisfy the desire of every living thing. *Psalm 145:15–16***
- P Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
 C **hide me in the shadow of Your wings. *Psalm 17:8***
- P My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
 C **for He will pluck my feet out of the net. *Psalm 25:15***
- P For I know that my Redeemer lives,

C and at the last He will stand upon the earth.

P And after my skin has been thus destroyed,

C yet in my flesh I shall see God,

P whom I shall see for myself,

C and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

My heart faints within me! Job 19:25–27

Confession

P As we perceive how the people around Jesus were unable to truly see Him, let us confess our own failures to respond to His grace and mercy.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P The disciples misjudged the good deed of the woman who anointed Jesus,

C and we have failed to see that He is pleased with the loving service of His followers.

P Judas betrayed Jesus out of fear and for financial gain,

C and we have betrayed our weak faith in Him when making difficult decisions.

P Jesus' closest disciples gave in to sleep rather than watching and praying,

C and we have preferred physical comfort over spiritual turmoil.

P Peter failed to keep his bold promise of faithfulness to save his skin,

C and we have let Sunday's strength fade when Monday morning dawned.

P Jesus fulfilled the promise of salvation, even as His opponents sought to be rid of Him,

C and He went to the cross because of our sins as well.

P Pilate wanted to keep his political position, the soldiers saw only a weak man on the cross,

C **and we have let ourselves be deceived by the world's definition of success.**

P Jesus' body and blood are not visible in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper,

C **and we have not always looked beyond what our eyes can see in the Sacrament.**

P His Father forsook Jesus on the cross as He took all the punishment we deserve,

C **and we have, at times, focused on our best efforts instead of fixing our eyes on Jesus.**

P Jesus' followers didn't understand before Easter that He was only resting temporarily,

C **and we have not always looked beyond our physical health or longevity.**

P The angel proclaimed Jesus' resurrection to the women,

C **and we pray that You, heavenly Father, will forgive us all our sins for Jesus' sake. Help us fix our eyes on Jesus each day until we follow Him to our eternal home, where we shall see You face to face.**

Forgiveness

P "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides [the Lord], who acts for those who wait for Him" (Isaiah 64:4). As a called and ordained servant of Christ, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Psalmody *Psalm 27; antiphon: v.1*

P The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,

C my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

P Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;

C though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

P One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

**C that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.**

P For He will hide me in His shelter in the day of trouble;

C He will conceal me under the cover of His tent; He will lift me high upon a rock.

P And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me,

**C and I will offer in His tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.**

C The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

P Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;

C be gracious to me and answer me!

P You have said, "Seek My face."

C My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek."

P Hide not Your face from me.

C **Turn not Your servant away in anger,**

P O You who have been my help.

C **Cast me not off; forsake me not, O God of my salvation!**

P For my father and my mother have forsaken me,

C **but the LORD will take me in.**

P Teach me Your way, O LORD,

C **and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.**

P Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;

C **for false witnesses have risen against me, and they breathe out violence.**

P I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD

C **in the land of the living!**

P Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage;

C **wait for the LORD!**

C **The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?**

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

First Reading *Isaiah 59:1–3, 12–13*

P Isaiah laments how Israel has been denying the Lord. A reading from the 59th chapter of Isaiah.

¹Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; ²but your iniquities have made a separation between you

and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear. ³For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies; your tongue mutters wickedness. ¹²For our transgressions are multiplied before you, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and we know our iniquities:¹³transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

P Paul reminds us that God and His Word can always be trusted.

A reading from the second chapter of Paul's Second Letter to Timothy.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, ⁹for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Third Reading

P Jesus commends Peter's profession of faith but rebukes him for trying to deny what Jesus has just prophesied.

A reading from the eighth chapter of Mark.

²⁷And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." ³⁰And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him. ³¹And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." ³⁴And he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ³⁵For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. ³⁶For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life?

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Responsory

P In your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy.

C **Though we have not seen Him, we love Him.**

Though we do not now see Him, we believe in Him and rejoice with joy.

P If you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed.

C **Though we have not seen Him, we love Him. Though we do not now see Him, we believe in Him and rejoice with joy.**

P In your hearts, honor Christ the Lord as holy.

C **Though we have not seen Him, we love Him. Though we do not now see Him, we believe in Him and rejoice with joy.**

Passion *Mark 14:26–31, 66–72*

P This Lent, we are looking at the events of our Lord's Passion through the eyes of some of the people who witnessed it. Today, we echo the brave words of Peter and the disciples (for "they all said the same"), as well as Peter's denials. Do we also reflect Peter's remorse, or have we hidden our faults even from ourselves?

The Passion of Our Lord according to St. Mark, the 14th chapter.

²⁶ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷ And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.'²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee."²⁹ Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not."³⁰ And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times."³¹ But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same . . . ⁶⁶ And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, ⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at

him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”
⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed. ⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”
⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” ⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.” ⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.
C **Thanks be to God.**

P Had this hymn been written in Peter’s day, it would have served as his prayer for Christ crucified to help him deal with fears and tears.

Hymn “Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou Hast Blessed”
#560

- 1 Drawn to the cross, which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,
To find in Thee my life, my rest,
Christ crucified, I come.
- 2 Thou knowest all my griefs and fears,
Thy grace abused, my misspent years;
Yet now to Thee with contrite tears,
Christ crucified, I come.
- 3 Wash me and take away each stain;
Let nothing of my sin remain.
For cleansing, though it be through pain,
Christ crucified, I come.

4 And then for work to do for Thee,
Which shall so sweet a service be
That angels well might envy me,
Christ crucified, I come.

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Sermon “Denying Eyes”

Canticle

P We are using hymn 420 as the canticle for each of our midweek Lenten services. Today’s second stanza gives thanks that, in spite of our disgrace, Jesus has paid the price and calls us His own.

Hymn “Christ, the Life of All the Living” #420 v. 1, 4, 7

1 Christ, the life of all the living,
Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving
To the darkest depths of woe:
Through Thy sufferings, death, and merit
I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

4 Heartless scoffers did surround Thee,
Treating Thee with shameful scorn
And with piercing thorns they crowned Thee.
All disgrace Thou, Lord, hast borne,
That as Thine Thou mightest own me
And with heav’nly glory crown me.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

7 Then, for all that wrought my pardon,
For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden,
I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,
For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry,
And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

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Salutation

P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the Church around the world, ourselves,
and all people in their various needs.

The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their
food in due season. *Psalm 145:15*

For farmers and ranchers and those who bring food to
market, that God would provide favorable weather,
bountiful harvests, and relief from both drought and
flood, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Look on them all in Your mercy, heavenly Father.**

P My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He will pluck
my feet out of the net. *Psalm 25:15*

For all who struggle with unemployment or
underemployment, with poor living conditions or
displacement from home, with personal demons or ill
health, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Behold their turmoil, Lord Jesus, and grant them
relief and hope.**

P His lightnings light up the world; the earth sees and trembles. *Psalm 97:4*

For all people in authority over communities and countries, all whose decisions affect the climate of the planet and the health of its inhabitants, and all who are charged to maintain justice within their borders and peace among nations, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Gaze upon Your servants, O Lord; protect and guide them that they may serve with wisdom, compassion, and courage.**

P I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD. *Psalm 121:1–2a*

For all who serve the Lord as they care for others—medical personnel and first responders, counselors and advisers, friends and neighbors, professionals and volunteers—let us pray to the Lord.

C **Observe how they use the gifts You have given them, O Holy Spirit, and open doors of opportunity for them so that many may rejoice together.**

P Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings. *Psalm 17:8*

For the Church around the world, as clergy and lay leaders seek to proclaim the Gospel and faithfully endeavor to share their faith, especially in the face of persecution, let us pray to the Lord.

C **See their struggle, O Holy Spirit, and give them strength to persevere and grow.**

P Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! *Psalm 34:8*

For the Church, wherever it gathers around Word and Sacrament, relying on God's steadfast love and faithfulness, and looking forward to the fulfillment of

all His gracious promises, let us pray to the Lord.

C Watch over Your Church, Lord Jesus; protect and defend us until that day we see You face to face.

P Into Your hands, heavenly Father, we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

Prayer from Sunday

P Let us pray. O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways

C and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word;

P through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Prayer for Peace

P Let us pray. O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works,

C give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness;

P through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Nunc Dimittis

P Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping, that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.

Benediction

P The blessing of almighty God—the Father, who saw mankind’s hopeless condition, the (+) Son, who showed the depth of God’s love, and the Holy Spirit, who has opened our eyes of faith in Christ—be upon you now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Hymn “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted” #451 v. 1, 2

- 1 Stricken, smitten, and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected;
Yes, my soul, 'tis He, 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet,
David’s Son, yet David’s Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it:
'Tis the true and faithful Word.
- 2 Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning,
Was there ever grief like His?

Friends through fear His cause disowning,
Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would intervene to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him
Was the stroke that justice gave.

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Dismissal

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

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