

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 - Scripture: Matthew 10:29-31; Song: "Sparrows"

It's Wednesday, April 7th and while you read this, I will finally be having my second eye surgery, with a cornea transplant and cataract surgery on my right eye. In some ways, I probably won't worry as much because I already had the same surgery on my other eye and God blessed the doctors with skills and talents that have me seeing better than I have since I was a child. I know there is no pain and what to expect so it should help. But... I know we are all sinful and that things don't always go as planned, so there is still some fear involved. When that happens, it is helpful for me, and hopefully for you as well, to go to Scripture, to the words of the one who is never wrong. In Matthew 10, Jesus himself is talking about worry and to be concerned about other humans, especially the head of the house. He says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows." Encouraged by these words of Jesus, I know that I'm not alone, that Jesus is with me. He cares for me even then he does the Sparrows. I will be listening to the words of our song for today on my way to the surgery center in Jackson. It is called "Sparrows." It is based on the words of Jesus that serves as our Scripture reading. Gray sings, "You may feel alone, but you are not your own," a reminder that is comforting. Gray sings, "He wants to Carry it" with a picture of Christ's cross in the background. If Jesus cared enough for me to die for me, he won't leave me alone on a day like today. So, as you listen to this comforting song, pray for me again, that I rest in the peace that knowing Jesus gives to all of us who love him and are called according to his purpose.

[Sparrows - Jason Gray \(With lyrics\)](#)

Friday, April 9, 2021 - Scripture: John 1:29; Song: "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing"

It's Friday again and almost a week since Easter. I believe it's time for another of the great hymns of Easter to encourage us as we come to the end of another week. Today's hymn is "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing." If you listen to the words, there is much of Holy week involved in the words: Jesus' blood from His riven side and more. It reminds us that we needed to go through all that with Jesus to get to the high feast day of Easter. If Jesus hadn't suffered and died, there would be no Easter. If Jesus hadn't suffered and died and rose again, there is no way we could get through another Friday. The Lamb at the feast that the hymn talks about is the same lamb who John the Baptist recognized at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, three years before he died for us, as John told the people (and us), "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." And Jesus did that by taking our sins and the sins of the whole world to the cross. God then raised Him from the dead, as proof that what he had done was enough, that the punishment he endured, satisfied God's need for justice for our sins. Now each

Sunday, including Easter, we celebrate at the Lamb's high feast. And as the hymn points out, the center of that celebration is Christ's supper where he offers us his body and blood, for the forgiveness of our sins, and to assure us we are his. So sing along with the hymn, come to church often to celebrate the Lamb's high feast, and know that doing that, it will make getting through another Friday that much easier.

["At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" Lutheran Service Book LSB #633](#)

Monday, April 12, 2021 - Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:17-20; Song: "This Joyful Eastertide"

We are about to begin the third week of the seven weeks of Easter in the church. And still plenty of Easter hymns and Easter Contemporary songs to choose from. Easter is more than thus one day as I've said before and today's hymn shows that. It's "This Joyful Eastertide." Notice the title is not "This Joyful Easter day." The song shows us that the results of Christ's resurrection on Easter go on forever for Christ followers, those who trust in his life, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of our sins and the promise of life eternal. Verse 2 of the hymn says it all: "Had Christ who once was slain, not broke his three-day prison, our faith had been in vain, but now has Christ arisen." The writer of the hymn takes his thoughts from Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians, chapter 15, which is known as the resurrection chapter. Paul writes in verses 17 to 20: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, you are still in your sins.... If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to pitied. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep." The beauty of many of our hymns is that the words come right from Scripture like this one. No matter how much we struggle in life, we share in Christ's resurrection victory. That's why we can deal with covid-19 and the economy and family issues and more. Listen to the hymn and know the peace that comes from sharing in Christ's resurrection.

[This Joyful Eastertide \[with lyrics for congregations\]](#)

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 - Scripture: John 19:25-27; Song: "My Redeemer Lives"

On Easter, I chose the hymn "I Know that My Redeemer Lives" for my first song devotion of the season. Today, I am choosing another song with the word Redeemer in the title. It's more contemporary than the first one, but that doesn't make it any less meaningful. The song is "My Redeemer Lives" by Nicole C. Mullen. And the Scripture verse is the same one I used before, the words of Job himself from chapter 19, verse 25 to 27: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see

him with my own eyes- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" I am writing this before my eye surgery, which by now, will have taken place a week ago, and I'm sure much has changed since then. But things were not great when I wrote this, Covid-19 wise, and people were still struggling in a lot of other ways, dealing with several mass shootings, serious illnesses and more. I was doing well, a bit concerned about my surgery and that caused some angst. So, the words of the second verse of the hymn were written for me as well as for all of you: "The very God that spins things in orbit, Runs to the weary the worn and the weak. And the same gentle hands that hold me when I'm broken, They conquer death to give me victory." We are among the weary, worn, and weak, just as Job was. Yet Job was able to say and know that when his skin was destroyed because of the promise of the Messiah, he would see God. Because our Redeemer lives, he will strengthen us while we deal with life's problems today and with Job, we can say "My Redeemer lives" and look forward to life forever with him as well. Don't let life get you down, know that with our own eyes, even me with my bad eyes, we will see Jesus.

[Nicole C. Mullen - My Redeemer Lives \(Lyrics\)](#)

Friday, April 16, 2021 - Scripture: John 20:19; Song: "O Sons and Daughters of the King"

One of the parts of the Easter account that we can relate to, I believe, is what happened with the disciple Thomas who for some reason wasn't in the upper room on Easter when Jesus appeared to the rest of the disciples. I think the reason we relate to Thomas is that most if not all of us at times have doubts. Whether it's doubts about Jesus being alive again like Thomas did, or doubts about God being with us during the tough times when they don't seem to be getting better, or doubts about Jesus forgiving us because Satan has convinced that what we've done is too bad for God to forgive us, we all have doubts. Our hymn for Today, "O Sons and Daughters of the King" retells the Easter visit of Jesus to the disciples and then his return when Thomas was there. The obvious reason Thomas doubted was because he didn't have Jesus' words to the disciples from John 20:19 when he stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Those words are repeated in the third verse of the hymn. In the fifth verse then, is Jesus' encounter with Thomas. Jesus had Jesus touch the wounds in his hands and then in his side. And he told Thomas, "Stop doubting and believe." When you and I doubt, let's go to Scripture and hear again the words of Jesus, "Peace be with you." We won't get the kind of peace we need anywhere else. As Jesus himself said, the peace I give you, the world cannot give. The peace of Jesus be with you as you struggle with Covid-19 and anything else that life gives you, and when you doubt, remember that Jesus is risen and he told Thomas, "Stop doubting and believe." Sounds easy doesn't it? Because of our sinful nature it's not, but that's why God sent Jesus to the cross so that all our sins including doubt are forgiven. Have a great day in Jesus and be encouraged as you listen to the hymn.

Monday, April 19, 2021 - Scripture: Matthew 28:6; Song: "The Easter Song"

One of the earliest contemporary Christian Easter songs I remember was first done by 2nd Chapter of Acts” or Don Francisco and it was called the Easter Song. I haven’t heard it for a long time, but I recently discovered it again, this time redone and sung by Tiffany Coburn. I decided to use it for a Monday as it is peppy and lively and something we probably all need to listen to on such a day as this. Much of the song is taken from the words of the angels to the ladies at the tomb when they asked where Jesus was in Matthew 28:6: “He is not here, he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. Thee you will see him.” It’s been just over 2 weeks since Easter Sunday and by now maybe some of the joy of that day has worn off for you and others around you. Maybe just what you need to hear today is that Jesus is still risen and that the joy of the day hasn’t ended. Maybe you are still pumped up but maybe those around you aren’t. If so, maybe the angel’s words to the women are for you. Maybe your job for today is to cheer someone up who is struggling with life, with the good news of the resurrection. Jesus is alive and as the song says, that makes all the difference in the world. , I am back in the saddle after my eye surgery, but still waiting for my new lens that will clear up my vision and I can assure you that the news of the resurrection is keeping me going and God willing, I will be reflecting that love God showed in my life. Praying that will be the case for you as well. So, as you deal with another Monday, remember the Easter Story, the one who was crucified for you is no longer dead. He’s risen, Alleluia.

[Tiffany Coburn - The Easter Song OFFICIAL Lyric Video](#)

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 - Scripture: John 11:25; Song: "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds"

One of my favorite hymns of Easter is finally on the docket for today. It’s “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds.” I want to piggyback on Monday’s encouraging song called the “Easter Song” and its announcement that “Christ is not here, he is risen as he said,” with today’s hymn. Jesus did predict his resurrection more than once to the disciples. In fact, before he died, he called himself the “Resurrection and the Life.” You know the verse it was right in the middle of a death in John 11. Jesus’ friend, Lazarus had died and for whatever reason Jesus didn’t get there until a few days after he died and was in the tomb. He came to the scene and talked first with Martha who confronted him with the words, “If you would have been here my brother would not have died.” Jesus talked to her about Lazarus rising again and Martha said, “I know he will rise again at the resurrection at the last day.” Then Jesus replied with the words, “I am the

resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die, and whoever believes in me will never die.” Then he raised Lazarus from the dead to show this to be true, not at the last day either, but right then. Then Jesus himself rose on Easter to show the world that he is “the resurrection and the life.” What strength that gives us, to know that what Jesus says, happens. And the hymn has a message for us who are struggling like Martha was. For her it was her brothers’ death. For us it could be a number of things, Covid-19, the death of a loved one like Martha, other illnesses, family problems, you name it. The verse of the hymn that I believe applies to all of this is this: “O Fill us Lord with dauntless love, that we conquer through your triumph. Grant grace sufficient for life’s day, that by our lives we truly say, Christ has triumphed, he is living.” For because Christ has triumphed, so have we. By conquering death for us, he conquered all these other issues. May the hope of the resurrection, strengthen you in all your struggles, his grace is sufficient. I pray this hymn helps you to believe that.

["Now All The Vault of Heaven Resounds" with Craig and Arkay](#)

Friday, April 23, 2021 - Scripture: Revelation 1:18; Song: “Forever”

Today’s song: “Forever” by Kari Jobe is probably not very familiar. But the video with it and the words are powerful. I wish I had found it to use during Holy Week but it’s still the Easter season, only halfway through it, in fact, and it will work as we come to another Friday. I am writing this two and half weeks before it will be published so I don’t know if it will be a good Friday or not, based on earthly standards anyway. Will the Covid-19 number be going down or up? Will the weather be nice or threatening? Will there have been more mass murders? Will Congress and the President still be in disagreement or will our governor give us more restrictions? In the bigger scheme of things, as I see it, none of those will matter that much, at least in whether it is a good Friday. What matters to me is what happened on the first Good Friday. The song forever talks about the events of that first Good Friday and the actors actually enact that day again. And at the end, we hear the powerful message that forever he is alive again, forever he is lifted up. Jobe is echoing Jesus’ own words to John, in John’s dream in Revelation 1:18 where the future is revealed to John on the Island of Patmos. “Jesus says, “Do not be afraid, I am the first and the Last. I am the Living One. I was dead and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and hades.” So, whatever is going on in your life this Friday, it is a Good Friday- because of THE “Good Friday” and the Easter that followed. Make the good news that Jesus is alive forever a part of your day, today and forever, and Friday will always be a good day. Enjoy the song, even if you haven’t heard it before, and have a God blessed day!

[Forever Kari Jobe with Lyrics](#)

Monday, April 26, 2021 - Scripture: Psalm 23; Song: “The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

Yesterday if you attended church or listened to our online service, you know that we celebrated the 4th Sunday of Easter which is also known as Good Shepherd Sunday. It's one of my favorite Sundays of the year because of the beautiful hymns available to sing and the opportunity to share Jesus, the Good Shepherd. I have decided to use one of those hymns, "The King of Love My Shepherd Is" as today's hymn. It shouldn't be hard to figure out what Psalm was used as the Psalm for Good Shepherd Sunday, it must be Psalm 23 which starts out, at least in the King James, "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll not want." I have also chosen it as the Scripture passage for today's hymn and you'll see when you listen to it that it's the passage the hymn writer uses as well. It's probably been like this in every generation since David wrote the Psalm, but it certainly applies today, that these words of Psalm 23 are of great comfort and a source of strength in our day during the pandemic we face. In our Good Shepherd, Jesus, God has provided us with all we need to deal with the pandemic and everything else we struggle with in this life. Most, if not all our issues are a struggle because of sin, either our own or the sins of others around us. In fact, in the perfect world that God created before Adam and Eve brought sin into the world there would not have been Covid-19 or any other problems either. But God did not leave us in our sin and sent his Son Jesus, the Good Shepherd to lead us from death to life. As David said in the Psalm, "Yea though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and staff they comfort me." Look to one of the hymn verses and you will find those words quoted. There is a verse in the hymn about the table prepared that David refers to in verse 4 of the Psalm and you will see the reference to Jesus' table there as we sing about the chalice. And the last verse of the hymn reminds us as Psalm 23 does, that goodness and mercy will follow us all the days of our lives, despite our sin, and we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. The hymn and the Psalm both remind us that God has not left us alone in the pandemic as many would claim, the Good Shepherd is with us. Enjoy the hymn and the peace that David shares in Psalm 23.

[The King of Love My Shepherd Is \(Lyrics\)](#)

Friday, April 30, 2021 - Scripture: Matthew 10:32-33; Song: "Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me" LW512

Today's devotion is for the last day of April 2021 and it is amazing to me how fast this year is going, especially compared to the year that seemed to go on forever last year in 2020. The hymn I chose today has nothing to do with it being the last day of April though. It's one of the hymns we will sing Sunday in our in-person service as we celebrate Confirmation for 3 of our beloved young people. The hymn is "Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me" a hymn we use quite often right before the Confirmation rite. Right after this hymn, these 3 young adults will confirm that they are Christ followers, and that with God's help they intend to follow Christ, with the same faith that God placed in their hearts at their baptism. And the reason we will have them do that is because of Jesus'

words from Matthew 10:32 and 33: “Whoever confesses me before others, I will also confess before my Father in heaven. But he who denies me before others, I will deny before my Father in heaven.” And if you think about it, if anyone is going to do that, they certainly need the Lord to take their hand and lead them. For those who sometime in our lives went through Confirmation and confessed our faith in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, today’s devotion is a good reminder of what that is all about. It’s not popular to be a Christian at any time but today it’s much harder, I believe, that when I was growing up, many more folks were involved in church then and if folks weren’t they were at least tolerant of what went on in church on Sunday morning. Today in almost every way, Christians are thought of as “being the worst.” If we say we don’t agree with someone’s actions, we are called bigots and homophobes and a number of other titles. If we speak up for what God teaches, we are accused of hate speech. And the list goes on and on. But don’t despair. Those things are temporary. If we speak up for our faith, Jesus himself promises to speak on our behalf before the Father in heaven. That is powerful. The names we are called and the way we are treated and will be treated are temporary. So, pray for these 3 young folks that God will take their hands and lead them to stay strong in their faith and be encouraged that you are not alone as you speak up for God. As Jesus has promised, he is with you always even to the close of the age. Listen to the hymn and be blessed.

[Lord Take My Hand and Lead Me - LW 512](#)