

## MIDWEEK OF LENT 4

### BARABBAS

Barabbas was a heartless, brutal criminal with anger in his heart and blood on his hands. Custom dictated that Pontius Pilate should release one prisoner at the feast of Passover. Pilate knows Jesus is innocent and tries to get the crowd to ask for Jesus' release, but the crowd calls instead for Barabbas. The crowd condemns the innocent Jesus and demands that the guilty Barabbas receive a pardon. We are Barabbas. We are guilty and sinful and deserving of death. But we are also Barabbas in that Jesus takes our place, takes our punishment, and sets us free.

#### Opening Sentences:

P: O Lord, open my lips,

**C: and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

**C: make haste to help me, O Lord.**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.  
Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.**

#### Psalm 57:

P: For Your steadfast love is great to the heavens

**C: Your faithfulness to the clouds.**

P: Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,

**C: for in You my soul takes refuge;**

P: in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge,

**C: till the storms of destruction pass by.**

P: I cry out to | God Most High,

**C: to God who fulfills His purpose for me.**

P: He will send from heaven and save me;

**C: He will put to shame him who tramples on me.**

**God will send out His steadfast love and His faithfulness!**

P: My soul is in the midst of lions;

**C: I lie down amid fiery beasts—**

P: the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows,

**C: whose tongues are sharp swords.**

P: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

**C: Let Your glory be over all the earth!**

P: They set a net for my steps;

**C: my soul was bowed down.**

P: They dug a pit in my way,

**C: but they have fallen into it themselves.**

P: My heart is steadfast, O God,

**C: my heart is steadfast!**

P: I will sing and make melody!

**C: Awake, my glory!**

P: Awake, O harp and lyre!

**C: I will awake the dawn!**

P: I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples;

**C: I will sing praises to You among the nations.**

P: For Your steadfast love is great to the heavens,

**C: Your faithfulness to the clouds.**

P: Be exalted, O God, above the heavens!

**C: Let Your glory be over all the earth!**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen**

P: For Your steadfast love is great to the heavens,

**C: Your faithfulness to the clouds.**

### **Psalm Prayer:**

P: Merciful Lord, You are our refuge in time of trouble and our hope in distress. Keep us in Your care that we may be raised from the death of sin to life in Christ and give faithful witness to Your mercy by proclaiming Your name and Your salvation to the nations; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **Hymn: “Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted” - Hymn # 451**

### **First Reading: Zechariah 9:11-12**

P: A reading from Zechariah, the ninth chapter.

As for you also, because of the blood of My covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 3:15–18**

P: A reading from Second Corinthians, the third chapter.

Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the

Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

P: Lord, have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Third Reading:** John 18:38b-40

P: A reading from St. John, the eighteenth chapter.

After Pilate had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them, "I find no guilt in Him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Lenten Responses:**

P: Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**C: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

P: In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O Lord, my God.

**C: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

P: Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

**C: Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.**

**Sermon Hymn:** "*Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*" - **Hymn #528**

**Sermon:** "*Witness to Jesus: Barabbas*" - **John 18:38b-40**

P: Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

**C: and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

**Song of Mary:** "*Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord.*" - **Hymn #935**

**Kyrie:**(Lord, Have Mercy)

**ALL: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

**Lord's Prayer**

**Prayers:** (Based on John 18:33-38a)

P: So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and

the chief priests have delivered You over to me. What have You done?” Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.” Then Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.” Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?”

P: Lord Jesus, You came into this world to announce Your Kingship:

**C: “The time has come! The kingdom of God is here. Repent and believe the good news!”** (Mark 1:15)

P: Many may reject You as King, but we have the certain decree of Your Father:

**C: “The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in His wrath, saying, ‘I have installed My king on Zion, My holy mountain.’ I will proclaim the LORD’s decree. He said to Me, ‘You are My Son; today I have become Your Father.’”** (Psalm 2:4-7)

P: You indeed are King!

**C: “On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”** (Revelation 19:16)

P: Since You are our King, help us to trust in Your power:

**C: “His incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength He exerted when He raised Christ from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms,**

P: far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

**C: And God placed all things under Jesus’ feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is Christ’s body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”** (Ephesians 1:19-23)

P: Give us the patience to wait for You to come as our King:

**C: “God will bring about in His own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”** (1Timothy 6:15)

P: Move us to love others as we await Your coming as King:

**C: “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne.**

P: All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on His left.

**C: Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’”** (Matthew 25:31-36)

(other concerns . . .)

P: All this we pray as we await when You come again. Until then may our song ever be:

**C: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” (2 Timothy 1:17)**

P: Lord, hear my prayer.

**C: And let my cry come to You.**

P: Let us bless the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Blessing:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”- Hymn #338**