



The Messenger

International Lutheran Church

www.ilcseoul.org | March 23, 2025 | Issue #950

A NOTE FROM PASTOR CARL

FOR OUR SAKE... HE WAS CUT DOWN

And he [Jesus] told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none."

(Luke 13:6 ESV) Our theme for Lent, *For Our Sake*, helps us meditate on our Savior's suffering and death for us. Today at International Lutheran Church, God's Word digs into our lives, calling and inviting us to a life of repentance so that real change and real fruit can be found in our lives.

Each tragedy, personal or collective, has the potential to cause us to ask some pretty hefty questions. These tragedies, whether intentional or seemingly random occurrences, often set in motion a series of dominos that end in questioning the nature and goodness of God. I only need to recall a few like 9/11, or the Indonesian Tsunami of 2004, or the ToHoKu Earthquake of 2011, the Bosnian War from 1992-95, Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge, or even something a little closer to home like the Halloween Crush of 2022 right here in Itaewon. Each of these events has the same immediate effect in making us question *Why?* Had they done something wrong to deserve this? Not surprisingly the same questions were common in Jesus' day. In Luke 13:1-9 we read about certain people that come to Jesus with the news flash of the Galileans whose blood was mixed with their sacrifices by Pilate, and the presumable question, *What did they do to deserve such a fate?* Or what about the 18 people killed by the tower in Siloam that fell on the people in Jerusalem. Did they somehow "deserve" to perish in just this way?

Jesus' reply to these tragedies is important, both His emphatic and clear teaching on the connection between our sin and the circumstances of our life, but also His revealing parable that really digs into our personal lives. First the emphatic response: No! Jesus clearly refutes in the strongest terms the one-to-one relationship between tragedy and sin. While He does not say that they were innocent, neither does He announce their or our innocence as the basis for God's goodness. No, in fact, He goes on to point out that the destruction or Hell that we fear is real. Unless we repent, turn aside from our wrong thinking and acting, we too will face this finality. To further elaborate this point Jesus offers up a parable to point to both our sin and our Savior. He tells the story of a vineyard and a fig tree that is unproductive for three years. What keeps the tree alive is the plea of the caretaker, who asks for one more chance at change, real change. Through His effort, and His alone, the fig tree will be spared. Jesus is pointing to the truth of repentance that it is not a product of our own effort, but of His. He must dig and lay down the only thing that can make it change - His own life.

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 AM	<i>Bible Class and Sunday School</i>
10:00 AM	<i>Divine Worship Service</i> (in-person and live stream)
7:00 PM	<i>Bible Study</i> (live stream)

OTHER EVENTS

Go to ilcseoul.org > Upcoming for other events

Jesus' words reveal just how far He will go to bring about the fruit of repentance in your life and mine. *For Our Sake*, He was cut down on the cross. He suffered the full and final consequences of our willing disobedience and actions. He answered our questions of the "goodness" of God, and "where is God in _____ (fill in the blank with whatever tragedy you are facing right now)" with His very life. He became "manure," something to be tossed out, and was planted in the tomb so that you and I would spring forth with new life in Him. Just as the cherry blossoms are about to burst forth, so God's grace is working in you and me to burst forth with the fruit of repentance. Repentance is a daily thing we do as Christians, not just during Lent or when we come together for the Divine Service. Luther encouraged the Christians of his day to make the sign of the cross in the morning and at night knowing that we are redeemed and made right by Jesus Christ and Him alone through His death for our sake. This is the news flash we need to share this week. This is the news our families need to hear each day. This is the news our neighbors and co-workers need lived out in their lives and ours.

Your eternal home and mine is what moved Jesus, drove him to go all the way for each and every person that is made in His image. As we find ways to be the very shelter for our neighbor through the forgiveness of sins won for us and all, we also seek to comfort and care for all displaced people no matter where they are. Our greatest gift is to share with one and all of the home that has been built not with human hands but with God's love and grace. *For Our Sake*, Jesus was rejected that we would be welcomed and received!

Pastor Carl

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Unless otherwise noted, you may direct inquiries for any announcement to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Links to online or live stream events will be included in either the electronic version of *The Messenger* or will be sent out on Sunday morning.

LENTEN SEASON

Today we mark the Third Sunday in Lent. Purple is used during this penitential season of Lent as a vivid reminder of the contempt and scorn that Jesus endured, and the subsequent sacrifice He made for our eternal salvation. There are five Sundays in Lent, followed by Palm Sunday and then the Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter).

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

We will hold a brief regular congregational meeting today (3/23) immediately after the service. The main purpose of this meeting will be the presentation and approval of the church budget for the upcoming fiscal year. Baked Potato Fellowship Luncheon will take place right after the meeting. We will have the kimchi jar out for KRW 5,000 donations for adults. Thank you for your participation in the community and fellowship of the church!

BONHOEFFER MOVIE EVENT

Next Sunday (3/30) at 1:30PM, come to ILC for a viewing of the new Bonhoeffer film. Come and learn more about the story of this Lutheran pastor during the WWII era.

NEW BANK ACCOUNT

If you make use of online giving, please review the new banking details shared in this issue of *The Messenger*.

LENTEN DEVOTIONS FROM LHM

Lutheran Hour Ministries provides a free devotional available in print and audio. At ILC, you can pick up a printed booklet or go online to www.lhm.org/lent for digital access.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

ONLINE GIVING - NEW ACCOUNT

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FAITHFULLY MAKING USE OF ONLINE GIVING.

NEW: Please note that we are switching to receive deposits to a new account. The Citibank account is still open, but over these next few months we will be closing that account. Thank you!

KEB HANA 166-890039-91604

READINGS

March 23: Third Sunday in Lent

OT	Ezekiel 33:7-20
NT	1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Gospel	Luke 13:1-9

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

If you are interested in serving as a worship assistant, or need to make a scheduling adjustment, please write to seoulilc.volunteer@gmail.com. Thank you!

MARCH 23

10:00 AM

ACOLYTE	Cora & Maggie
GREETER	Dee Dee
USHERS	Eric & Christian
COMMUNION ASSISTANT	James
LIVE STREAM	Ethan
KITCHEN HELPERS	Yoonsil & Juwon
OFFERING COUNTERS	Adam & Yoonsil



SERVANT
OF
THE
LORD

