

1 April 2026
Holy Wednesday Meditation

Saint Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“Trampling Our Enemies”
Text: Isaiah 63:11 - 64:7; Psalm 60

When you hear words like we heard from the prophet Isaiah tonight, you wonder . . . The words are about Jesus, but is He the trampler or the trampled? Is He the one who comes in wrath or in compassion? Is He the one who pours out blood or the one whose blood is poured out?

The answer is *both*.

That's what makes this Holy Week so special. No other god of any other people or nation is like this. There are so many religions and so many gods and they're all in it for themselves. They don't serve; they demand to *be* served. They don't lay down their life; they demand *you* do.

So Jesus is one of one. For He's all in *for you*.

Yes, there is wrath and judgment, for He is a just God. Those who rebel against Him and spurn His Word and Law will and must be punished. Otherwise His Word and Law are meaningless.

But He is also a compassionate God, who knows our weakness. Who knows the devastation caused by sin. Who knows we need saving if we are to have a future. So He comes to save. The trampler becomes the trampled. He bears the wrath of God against all the ungodliness and sinfulness of man. His blood is poured out so ours will not be. The Day of His wrath will come, but it is not yet. *Now is the favorable time. Now is the day of salvation* (2 Corinthians 6:2). Now is the time to seek and receive His forgiveness, life, and help.

So this week we do. Not *just* this week, but *especially* this week. We remember all that Jesus has done for us, how He has come to serve us, how He laid down His life for us. We repent, we marvel, we stand in awe and sit in silence. Sad and horrified by what was done to Him, but at the same time rejoicing that it was done to Him, for He did it to *save us*. To save *me*.

To save me from my *sins*, yes. But when it say it that way, sin sounds so impersonal, so disconnected. So let's substitute a word there for sins to make this a bit more real

... Let's use the word *enemies*. Jesus came to save us from our *enemies*.

So who are your enemies?

The psalm that we sang tonight mentioned three enemies that were constant thorns in Israel's side: Edom, Moab, and Philistia. Those nations, those people, harassed and harried Israel relentlessly.

So who are your Edom, Moab, and Philistia? Your enemies? The thorns in your side? For you it is not nations or even people. Remember what Saint Paul said: *We don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces of evil* (Ephesians 6:12). So yes, satan and his minions are your enemies, and we certainly need saving from them.

But think *more, deeper* ... think about not *who*, but *what*? What are the enemies in your life, the things in your life, that you are wrestling with, that are looking to defeat you and overcome you and make your life less than what God intended it to be? Enemies you cannot defeat, but need Jesus to trample?

How about anger? Or pride? Or resentment or bitterness? Or pornography? Or other sexual sins? Or alcohol? Or hatred? Or gluttony, covetousness, or greed? What are they for you? And how are these sins, these *enemies*, trampling you and being thorns in your flesh? Making you be who you do not want to be, and do what you do not want to do? So that you cry out: *Father, I cannot defeat that foe! I cannot save myself! Help me.*

And the good news is that you have a Father who does. Who sent His Son to be trampled in your place, and then to rise up and trample your enemies *for* you, *in* you. To save you. To forgive you and set you free. And who gives you His Spirit so that you not be captive to them, be overcome them. So that as we sang at the end of the psalm: ***With God we shall do valiantly; it is he who will tread down our foes.*** That our enemies not overcome us, but be overcome, by our Saviour. That's what this week is all about.

So this week, when we remember the Lord's Supper, the betrayal, the arrest and trial, the crucifixion, and the resurrection, think about all those enemies seeking to conquer you being conquered by Jesus. Think of Him being trampled by them on the cross, but then rising from the grave and trampling them! And then Jesus coming to you with His peace. The peace of His forgiveness. The peace of His freedom.

So that we can say with Isaiah:

*I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord,
the praises of the Lord . . .
that he has granted [us] according to his compassion,
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.*