

March 26 - Worrisome

[Luke 12:4-12](#)

**TRULY**  
**LENT IN REVERSE**  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY 2026 - REV. RYAN MATTHIAS

I'm going to give you the gospel first, because this is a portion of scripture that hits at our fragile consciences. When

Jesus says, "...but the one who denies me before men will be denied before the angels of God," there is, in many, a scrunching of the innards. We pace back and forth in our history trying to pinpoint the moments when we could have, should have said something about Jesus and we didn't. Then we fear.

The gospel is this: The only people who acknowledged Jesus at his crucifixion were a thief and some centurions. The apostle John and a few Marys (John 19:25) stare up at the crucified king, but they are impotently unable to do a thing save for John taking Mother Mary home from that hour.

The gospel is this (cringingly): everyone denied Jesus at this moment. Peter seemingly doubly so. But Jesus is pinned to the cross for precisely these things. And it is out of that joy that we are given the gift of acknowledging him before the world. It may come at the point of the sword. Who knows? It always fascinates me during the confirmation service when we ask very young men and women, who really rarely have any concept of death, this questions: "Do you intend to continue steadfast in this confession and Church and to suffer all, even death, rather than fall away from it?"

Beatific faces stare up at the pastor. No one really looks around at their neighbor and asks, "What did he just ask us?" They don't fret about it because they've been prepared beforehand that the question is coming. Here's the deal, though. The better preparation is for when it actually comes to pass. When the world demands an answer, God provides it.

I love the end of this section. “And when they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not be anxious about how you should defend yourself or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.” (Luke 12:11-12)

In Corrie Ten Boom’s book “The Hiding Place,” there is this sparkling moment of truth. Her dad tells her in the concentration camp that some will die. She’s anxious about having the courage of witness. Her father tells her this: “Our wise Father in heaven knows when you are going to need things too. Today you do not need the strength to be a martyr. But as soon as you are called upon for the honor of facing death for Jesus, He will supply the strength you need—just in time.”

The gospel is this: In any and every moment where a martyrdom of self is required, the Holy Spirit will give you strength from the cross because of Jesus’ witness. “Father forgive them,” doesn’t stop short when you have a bad day. You will be given the strength and joy to proclaim that the one who died on the cross, rested in the grave, and rose from the dead is “truly the Son of God.” You need not be anxious.

Truly.

**Jesus, You did all things necessary so that death would not be the end. Truly You are the Son of God, our Savior, our Strength. Amen.**