

Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021

Lent begins with a solemn call to fasting and repentance. As we hear in today's reading, now is the acceptable time to return to the Lord. During this Lenten season, the practices (habits) of the Christian faith will be the vessel through which we journey to the cross of Holy Week and Easter resurrection.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

GATHERING

Gathering Music

Introduction to the Service

Psalm, 51:1-17

- ¹Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- ²Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- ³For I know my offenses,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.⁵Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness,
a sinner from my mother's womb.
- ⁶Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me,
and would have me know wisdom deep within.
- ⁷Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.
- ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness;
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- ⁹Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my wickedness.
- ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
- ¹¹Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹²Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.
- ¹³Let me teach your ways to offenders,
and sinners shall be restored to you.
- ¹⁴Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation,
and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.
- ¹⁵O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
- ¹⁶For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You are not pleased with burnt offering.
- ¹⁷The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

Hymn, "Lord Jesus, Think on Me"

- 1. Lord Jesus, think on me,
and purge away my sin;
from selfish passions set me free
and make me pure within.**

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375-430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808-1896, alt.

Music: w. Daman, *The Psalms of David*, 1579, alt. Public Domain.

Greeting

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God.....one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

First Reading, Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 (same as last year)

Because of the coming day of the Lord, the prophet Joel calls the people to a community lament. The repentant community declares that God is gracious and asks God to spare the people lest the nations doubt God's power to save.

¹Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming, it is near—

²a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains

a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old,

nor will be again after them in ages to come.

¹²Yet even now, says the Lord,

return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;

¹³rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the Lord, your God,

for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,

and relents from punishing.

¹⁴Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him,

a grain offering and a drink offering for the Lord, your God?

¹⁵Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly;

¹⁶gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged;

gather the children, even infants at the breast.

Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy.

¹⁷Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the Lord weep.

Let them say, "Spare your people, O Lord, and do not make your heritage a mockery,

a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples,

'Where is their God?'"

Psalm, 103:8-14

⁸The LORD is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;

¹²as far as the east is from the west,
so far he removes our transgressions from us.

¹³As a father has compassion for his children,
so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.

¹⁴For he knows how we were made;
he remembers that we are dust.

Second Reading, 2 Corinthians 5:20-b-6:10

The ministry of the gospel endures many challenges and hardships. Through this ministry, God's reconciling activity in the death of Christ reaches into the depths of our lives to bring us into a right relationship with God. In this way, God accepts us into the reality of divine salvation.

^{20b}We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1}As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says,

"At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you."

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so

that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Gospel Acclamation

- P:** The Holy Gospel according
to St. Matthew the sixth chapter.
C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel, Matthew 6:1-6,16-21

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, but emphasizes that spiritual devotion must not be done for show.

Jesus said to the disciples: ¹“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Sermon, “The Christian Habit of Confession”

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Hymn, “Chief of Sinners Though I Be”

- 1. Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed his blood for me,
died that I might live on high,
lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am his and he is mine.**
- 2. Oh, the height of Jesus' love!
Higher than the heav'ns above,
deeper than the depths of sea,
lasting as eternity,
Love that found me-wondrous thought-
found me when I sought him not.**
- 5. O my Savior, help afford
by your Spirit and your word!
When my wayward heart would stray,
keep me in the narrow way;**

**grace in time of need supply
while I live and when I die.**

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Invitation to Lent

P: Friends in Christ, today with the whole church, we enter the time of remembering Jesus' Passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor.

P: I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent--self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love--strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Confession of Sin

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Most holy and merciful God,

C: we confess to you and to one another, and before the whole company of heaven, that we have sinned by our fault, by our own fault, by our own most grievous fault, in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

P: We have not loved you with our whole heart, mind, and strength.

We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: We have shut our ears to your call to serve as Christ served us.

We have not been true to the mind of Christ. We have grieved your Holy Spirit.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our past unfaithfulness, the pride, envy, hypocrisy, and apathy that have infected our lives, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our exploitation of other people, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our negligence in prayer and worship, and our failure to share the faith that is in us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our neglect of human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our false judgments, our uncharitable thoughts towards our neighbors, and our prejudice and contempt towards those who differ from us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Our waste and pollution of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us, we confess to you.

C: Have mercy on us, O God.

P: Restore us, O God, and let your anger depart from us.

C: Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.

Prayer

P: Accomplish in us, O God, the work of your salvation,

C: that we may show forth your glory in the world.

P: By the cross and passion of your Son, our Savior,

C: bring us with all your saints to the joy of his resurrection.

P: Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life.

C: Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

P: We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Concluding Prayer

P: Let us pray. Merciful God.....now and forever.

C: Amen

The Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C: Our Father, Who art in heaven.....forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

Blessing

Dismissal

Sending Music

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Confirmation Worship Notes for Wed. Feb. 17, 2021

Name _____ Grade _____

What is the name of this day in the church calendar (or what does the church call this day)?

What is the emphasis of this service?

Sermon Notes:

The Christian Habit for tonight's sermon is

Is confession easy or hard for you to do?

Three things are necessary for confession. What are they?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If someone comes to you to make private confession of sins (like confess sins they have done to other people), what are some things you can do?