



Sunday, March 10, 2024
4th Sunday in Lent

Service Theme
RETHINKING THE SOLUTION TO SIN

While not every religion uses the word “sin,” they all embrace the concept. Every religion acknowledges that mankind’s flawed attitudes or misguided actions are a source of pain, both now and potentially in eternity. So, every religion offers a solution: a set of laws, a moral code, and a path to more enlightened behaviour. What do they have in common? We are to solve sin through human effort. Be better! Try harder! This is the heart of every false religion. Those who correctly understand they will never overcome their sin are crushed by guilt. Those who ludicrously believe they have defeated their sin are killed by pride. True religion offers a better way—one that frees us from guilt and has no room for pride. Jesus teaches that the solution to our sin is not to work harder. It is to trust in the work he has done for us. Salvation comes through Spirit-wrought faith in Christ.

Hymn

CW 384 By Grace I'm Saved

1 By grace I'm saved, grace free and boundless;
My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why waver at this word of promise?
Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
So then this word must true remain:
By grace you, too, shall heav'n obtain.

2 By grace God's Son, our only Savior,
Came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of your own merit
That Jesus died your soul to win?
No, it was grace, and grace alone,
That brought him from his heav'nly throne.

3 By grace! Oh, mark this word of promise
When you are by your sins oppressed,
When Satan plagues your troubled conscience,
And when your heart is seeking rest.
What reason cannot comprehend
God by his grace to you did send.

4 By grace to timid hearts that tremble,
In tribulation's furnace tried—
By grace, despite all fear and trouble,
The Father's heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure
If grace were not my anchor sure?

5 By grace! On this I'll rest when dying;
In Jesus' promise I rejoice.
For though I know my heart's condition,
I also know my Savior's voice.
My heart is glad; all grief has flown
Since I am saved by grace alone.

Order of Service
Service of the Word (p.38)

M: The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

CONFESSION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give us strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER AND PRAISE
(CW p.39)

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

C: *(Sing)* **Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they who take refuge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness continues forever. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed are they who take refuge in him.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

(CW p.39)

M: Let us pray.

Grant, O merciful Lord, to your faithful people pardon and peace that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (Sing) Amen.

1st Lesson

Numbers 21:4-9 (EHV)

The LORD promised a solution for the bite of venomous snakes. That solution perhaps seemed nonsensical. Yet, all those who trusted God's promise lived.

⁴They set out from Mount Hor along the road to the Red Sea to go around the land of Edom, but the people became very impatient along the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Look, there is no food! There is no water! And we are disgusted by this worthless food!"

⁶The LORD sent venomous snakes among the people, and the snakes bit the people. As a result many people from Israel died. ⁷The people went to Moses and said, "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD to take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed on behalf of the people.

⁸The LORD said to Moses, "Make a venomous snake and put it on a pole. If anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live." ⁹Moses made a bronze snake and put it on the pole. If a snake had bitten anyone, if that person looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

Psalm 32
CW page78

Refrain

**Remember your mercy, O Lord;
remember your mercy and love.**

**Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,*
whose sins are covered.**

**When I kept silent, your hand was heavy upon me;*
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.**

**Then I acknowledged my sin to you*
and did not cover up my iniquity.**

**I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”*
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

Refrain

**You are my hiding place;*
you will protect me from trouble.**

**Many are the woes of the wicked,*
but the LORD’S unfailing love surrounds those who
trust in him.**

**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.**

Refrain

Second Lesson

Ephesians 2:1-10 (EHV)

God's solution to sin is offered by grace and received through faith.

You were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked when you followed the ways of this present world. You were following the ruler of the domain of the air, the spirit now at work in the people who disobey.

³Formerly, we all lived among them in the passions of our sinful flesh, as we carried out the desires of the sinful flesh and its thoughts. Like all the others, we were by nature objects of God's wrath.

⁴But God, because he is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved! ⁶He also raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. ⁷He did this so that, in the coming ages, he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.

¹⁰For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them.

Verse of the Day

(CW p.40)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

(The Alleluias and Gospel responses are omitted during the season of Lent)

Gospel Lesson

John 3:14-21 (EHV)

Christ is the solution to sin. Whoever believes in Christ shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁴“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵so that everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. ¹⁹This is the basis for the judgment: The light has come into the world, yet people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰In fact, everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, or else his deeds would be exposed. ²¹But the one who does what is true comes toward the light, in order that his deeds may be seen as having been done in connection with God.”

Hymn

CW 391 God Loved the World So that He Gave

**1 God loved the world so that he gave
His only Son the lost to save
That all who would in him believe
Should everlasting life receive.**

**2 Christ is the solid rock of faith,
Who was made flesh and suffered death.
All who confide in him alone
Are built on this chief cornerstone.**

**3 God would not have the sinner die—
His Son with saving grace is nigh.
His Spirit in the Word does teach
How we the blessed goal may reach.**

**4 Be of good cheer, for God's own Son
Forgives the sins that you have done.
You're justified by Jesus' blood;
Baptized, you are a child of God.**

**5 When you are sick, when death draws near,
This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves my soul from death—
This is the anchor of my faith!**

**6 Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise now and eternally!**

Sermon Text & Theme

Numbers 21:4-9 ... **Lord, grant us a faith . . .**

- 1) That does not complain.
- 2) That is willing to repent
- 3) That trusts in your promise of salvation.

Apostles' Creed

(CW p.41)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

**He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and
the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church, the communion
of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of
the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Offertory Prayer

Prayer of the Church

Heavenly Father, because of our sins, we justly deserve to suffer both your curse during our time on earth and your condemnation eternally in hell. But we plead for your mercy, because your Son, Jesus, suffered the punishment our sin deserved. For his sake you have forgiven our sins and cleansed us from all unrighteousness. Now, trusting that he will intercede for us, we dare to ask for your blessing.

Mercifully provide whatever each of us may need for body and life. Protect us and those we love from all harm and danger. Maintain good government among us, and bless all those in authority with wisdom and integrity. Defend us from the devil and the world, which would lure us back into the way that leads to eternal death. Destroy in us the desires that are contrary to your will. Comfort the persecuted, the depressed, the sick, and the dying with the assurance that nothing can separate us from your love.

Strengthen our faith by the Word of your forgiveness and by the sacrament of our Savior's own body and blood. Grant that we may praise you, our merciful God, by showing mercy to others in all their needs.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

We commit to your care our bodies and souls and all things, because you have purchased us to be your own with the sacrifice of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(CW p.43)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: *(sing)* **Amen.**

Blessing

(CW p.44)

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: *(Sing)* Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hymn

CW 331 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

**1 Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy pow'ful hand.
Bread of heaven, Feed me till I want no more.**

**2 Open now the crystal fountain
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fiery, cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.
Strong Deliv'rer, Be thou still my strength and shield.**

**3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises I will ever give to thee.**

Announcements

Week 4 of the Lenten Study Challenge:

It's not too late to start.

Only 2 weeks left for the study challenge but it's never too late to start your journey. This is a habit that continually blesses. God speaks to us through his word. It makes us wise for salvation. It helps us in our relationships on earth. It gives us peace in the chaos of our life because we are more focused on God's truth. So pick up a game sheet today for some suggestions of where to begin. Read any book in the Bible. Meditate on a verse by copying it down. Check out some great resources in our church library. And, as if the study itself isn't reward enough, we have a great prize basket to be given away Palm Sunday.

Easter Flowers

For anyone wishing to help beautify the Easter Sunday Altar, please drop off the plant(s) of your choice to the church by 11:00 am on Saturday March 30th. You are encouraged to take your plants home after the Easter Worship service. Any plants not taken away by end of day April 7th will need to be disposed of.

Church Cleaners:

March 10 - Luke // March 17 – Timothy

DIVINE WORD'S TWO-WEEK CALENDAR

Su (10) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship

Tu (12) 5:00 pm "Test the Spirits" Bible Info. Class

We (13) 7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Worship

Th (14) 6:00 pm Illuminé (at St. Paul's)

Fr (15) 3:00 pm Online Women's Bible Study

Su (17) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship & Communion
3:00 pm Worship in Poltimore

Tu (19) 5:30 pm "Test the Spirits" Bible Info. Class
7:00 pm Elders Meeting

We (20) 7:00 pm Midweek Lenten Worship

Th (21) 6:00 pm Illuminé (at St. Paul's)
6:30 pm Youth Confirmation (W)

Fr (22) 3:00 pm Online Women's Bible Study

Su (24) 9:00 am Sunday School and Bible Class
10:30 am Worship
12:00 pm Voters Meeting



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