

March 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday in Lent



8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

*At Abiding Word
We gather around the Word (worship)
We grow in the Word (education)
And we share the Word with the world (outreach).*



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Wisconsin Synod
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Welcome!

To all who have gathered here this morning we welcome you in the name of Christ our Lord. Through him we have access to God in boldness and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12) Please join us for coffee after the service. Also join us for Sunday School at 10:45 and Bible Study at 11:00.

RETHINKING RELIGION

Everyone has assumptions about God. Likewise, everyone has assumptions about religion. Increasingly, those assumptions are negative. Americans are walking away from Christianity in breathtaking numbers. It raises the question. How do those people know if their assumptions about religion are correct? Do they really understand Christianity at all? Do we? Do we truly understand this religion?

In the season of Lent, as much as any other, Jesus teaches things that turns the world's assumptions about religion completely upside down. We call it "Christianity." So, in this holy season, let us go straight to Christ and let him replace assumptions with truth. Jesus, help us to rethink religion!

RETHINKING DEVOTED COMMITMENT

Religious sociologists sometimes divide Christians into two groups: committed Christians and cultural Christians. The former are usually defined as those who are active in a congregation, who pray regularly, who read Scripture, etc. The latter are those individuals who call themselves Christian and perhaps have some Christian beliefs. Yet, they do not strive to live a Christian life. They are not interested in church involvement.

Those definitions are interesting when trying to understand shifts in American Christianity. However, they demonstrate a false assumption about the Christian religion. There is indeed a devoted commitment at the center of Christianity, but it is not man's commitment to God. Even believers will at times demonstrate lukewarm commitment at best. Instead, at the heart of Christianity we find God's devotion and commitment to us. It is a devoted commitment so strong that it put God on the cross.

Stand

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 you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**



1 With all my heart I praise you, Lord, that in your
 2 When I confess my sin and shame, peace and for -



Son you saved me. You saw in me what you de-plored;
 give - ness seek - ing, you grant me par - don in your name



my griev-ous sin en - slaved me. Yet, Lord, you paid
 be - fore I've fin - ished speak - ing! In love you lis -



the high - est price, Je - sus' a - ton - ing sac - ri - fice,
 ten care - ful - ly to all our sighs of mis - er - y,



that you might ev - er own me. Were I to bless
 our ev - 'ry need ad - dress - ing. Our guilt should make



you all my days, it would be in - suf - fi - cient praise
 you turn a - way; in - stead you turn toward us and say:



for kind - ness you have shown me.
 "Re - ceive my gra - cious bless - ing."

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PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Eternal God and Father, help us to remember Jesus, who obeyed your will and bore the cross for our salvation, that through his anguish, pain, and death we may receive the forgiveness of sins, victory over the grave, and finally inherit eternal life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Be seated

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 43:1-7

¹But now, this is what the LORD says—

he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel:

“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned;

the flames will not set you ablaze.

³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;

I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

⁴Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you,

I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.

⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east

and gather you from the west.

⁶I will say to the north, ‘Give them up!’ and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back.’

Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth—

⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 121 is a comfort psalm. We see how the Lord treats both the psalmist and us as we remain strong in faith, waiting for his help and protection. Even when it appears that God is sleeping, it is not so. He watches and keeps us secure event to the end.

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills—
where does my help come from?
- ² My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
- ⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
- ⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
- ⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
- ⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

**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.**

**Lord God, give me confidence that whether I'm waking or sleeping,
working or traveling, eating or relaxing, you are watching over me.
Every breath I draw, every beat of my heart
happens only under your watchful eye with the strength you provide.
So let me face each day with the calm assurance
that no real harm can come my way; in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

SECOND READING

HEBREWS 5:7-9

⁷During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered ⁹and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

GOSPEL

JOHN 12:20-33

²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival.

²¹They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." ²²Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

²³Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. ²⁵Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. ²⁶Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

²⁷"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. ²⁸Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." ²⁹The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

³⁰Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. ³²And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." ³³He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

M: This is the gospel of our Lord.



C: **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

571 O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth

- 1 O God, O Lord of heav'n and earth,
your living finger never wrote
that life should be an aimless mote,
a deathward drift from futile birth.
Your Word meant life triumphant hurled
in splendor through your broken world;
ere light awoke and life began,
you made for us a holy plan.
- 2 In blind revolt we would not see
that rebel wills wrought death and night.
We seized and used in fear and spite
your wondrous gift of liberty.
We walled us in this house of doom,
where death had royal scope and room,
until your servant, Prince of Peace,
broke down its walls for our release.
- 3 You came into our hall of death,
O Christ, to breathe our poisoned air,
to drink for us the deep despair
that strangled our reluctant breath.
How beautiful the feet that trod
the road to bring good news from God!
How beautiful the feet that bring
good tidings of our saving King!
- 4 O Spirit, who did once restore
the church that it might yet recall
the one who brings good news to all:
breathe on your cloven church once more
that in these gray and latter days
there may be those whose life is praise,
each life a high doxology
unto the holy Trinity.

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Stand

APOSTLES' CREED

**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.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Be seated

HYMN: THE TREE OF LIFE

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Stand

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.



BLESSING

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.



Be seated

572 Not What My Hands Have Done



1 Not what my hands have done can save my guilt - y
 2 Thy work a - lone, O Christ, can ease this weight of
 3 I bless the Christ of God, I rest on love di -
 4 I praise the God of grace, I trust his truth and



soul, not what my toil - ing flesh has borne can
 sin, thy blood a - lone, O Lamb of God, can
 vine, and with un - fal - t'ring lip and heart I
 might. He calls me his, I call him mine, my



make my spir - it whole. Not what I feel or
 give me peace with - in. Thy love to me, O
 call this Sav - ior mine. His cross dis - pels each
 God, my joy, my light. My Lord has saved my



do can give me peace with God, not all my prayers and
 God, not mine, O Lord, to thee can rid me of this
 doubt; I bur - y in his tomb each thought of un - be -
 life, and free - ly par - don gives; I love be - cause he



sighs and tears can bear my aw - ful load.
 dark un - rest and set my spir - it free.
 lief and fear, each lin - g'ring shade of gloom.
 first loved me, I live be - cause he lives.

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