

Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish
Order of Sunday Worship- Third Sunday in Lent– March 3rd, 2024
At Salem Lutheran Church

Prelude

Emily Larson, Musician

Welcome/Announcements

Invocation:

P: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

Opening Prayer:

P: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your holy Word. We pray that You would open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ's sake. **C: Amen.**

Hymn:

“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”

Concordia #180

Confession of Sin:

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Kyrie:

“Gathered in your Peace we Pray”

1. Gathered in your peace, we pray: **Grant your mercy, holy Lord.**

For our shattered world, this day: **Grant your mercy, holy Lord.**

Give us peace upon our way: **Grant your mercy, holy Lord.**

2. For the Church, your wounded Bride: **Grant your mercy, Jesus Christ.**

Heal, restore her to your side: **Grant your mercy, Jesus Christ.**

Take away her sin and pride: **Grant your mercy, Jesus Christ.**

3. For your people, saved by grace: **Grant your mercy, holy God.**

Make of us one holy race: **Grant your mercy, holy God.**

'Til we see you face to face: **Grant your mercy, holy God.**

Absolution:

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake God forgives all our sins. To those who believe in his name he gives power to become the children of God, and has promised them his Holy Spirit. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this Lord unto us all.

C: Amen.

Gloria:

P: Glory be to God in the highest.

C: And on earth peace, good will toward men.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray together.

C: Holy God, through your Son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach us the wisdom that comes only through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm-19

First Reading- Exodus 20:1-17

Second Reading- 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel Reading- John 2:13-22

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: God be praised for his glad tidings!

Apostles Creed

C: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator 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, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from whence he shall 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 life everlasting. Amen.

Children's Message – "Jesus Loves Me"

Offering and Offertory: *We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift might be. All that we have is Thine alone, a trust O Lord from Thee.*

Hymn:

"When I Survey the Wonderful Cross"

Concordia #178

Sermon

Pastor Lexy Carson

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

There's many portraits and scenes that we gravitate towards when we think of Jesus. I know for me personally I see the scene of him gathered with his flock of sheep, or one of him sitting with the little children around him. This image in our Gospel for today, of Jesus making a whip of cords, driving out livestock from the temple, dumping coins and flipping tables is not the first scene to come to mind of Christ.

And yet, this is absolutely a piece of his ministry and while it appears far more aggressive than him gathered with his flock and the little children, they all depict Jesus whose ministry never changed, he has always been gathering his chosen, forgiving sins and bringing life out of death.

Jesus's anger and aggression in the temple stemmed from what he was witnessing, he saw his chosen, his people, being caused to stumble, they were suffering, hurting right there in the hands of their own temple and Jesus was not and still will not allow anything or anyone to get in the way of him and his people.

So what was at stake? What was so wrong with the matters in the Temple? The call to sacrifice, to make offerings to God had become quite the lucrative business. In the daily lives of people in Judea and all Jews living in diaspora, had no choice but to carry Roman money. This was a graven image, carrying coins with the face of a false god on it. And what were the Jews to do? They had to buy groceries, supplies for every day life, pay their taxes and they lived in the Roman empire so they had no choice but to carry Roman currency. It was a necessary evil in the functioning of their lives and their religion.

This issue of Roman money, hitting head to head with the first commandment, led the religious leaders on a new business venture. They set up tables inside the courtyard of the temple where people could exchange their Roman money for an approved temple currency, without the face of Caesar on it of course. First Commandment, settled and fulfilled according to the religious leaders.

The second part of the narrative is the issue of giving a sacrifice to God. As dispersed Jews throughout the Roman empire, people would travel a long way to come to the temple to give their sacrifice to God. You couldn't be expected to travel as far as these people had to and bring a sheep or cattle the whole family. So merchants started setting up shops on the outskirts of the cities, selling livestock for people to purchase to make their sacrifice.

Then the religious leaders caught wind of this and they took matters into their own hands. They brought the livestock right into their own courtyards. They made the temple a very convenient one stop shop. Come with your graven image roman coins, we will exchange those for you, give you a nice hefty exchange fee of course and then use your "religiously approved" coins to purchase your livestock for your sacrifice. It truly was a genius business model for the temple. This was the most convenient, profit making venture that was the heart of worship life for the people of Judea.

They were going to pay and do whatever it took because it was what the religious leaders told them to do. This is what faith was for them, travel here, pay this, sacrifice this and you are good to go in the eyes of God. You could fulfill the law, without really having to do much of anything, it had become just that convenient.

At first glance, it appears Jesus's problem here is that he didn't want the sacred place of the temple to be commercialized. That he didn't want the livestock in there or the money exchanging. But Jesus's objections run far deeper than the commercialization.

Jesus is truly worried about the faith of his chosen people, the care of souls and that the only relationship God's people had with him was this one stop convenience shop where they could drop off their Roman coins, buy their sacrifice and they were good to go. They checked off all the right boxes, fulfilled the works God wanted from them. Now they could go on with the rest of their lives because they checked their sacrifice box off.

But Jesus doesn't want a relationship of piety, one where you write your check to the church and should be good to go. Jesus is not interested in trading good works, human devotion, or whatever we imagine that we may have to trade for God's good graces. The truth is that God's grace comes not as a traded commodity, but freely, as a gift of Jesus Christ.

And this is what Christ comes to overturn. No more hiding, no more disguising faith behind just giving the money, the sacrifice, the convenience of religion. This really brought the religious experience into our control, transactions, rules and uniformity and it is all in our hands, our controls. The profit to the temple was an added bonus but really the goal was to control God. To buy God. This gives us the control we yearn for that is our original sin.

We are not in control of God the creator and there's no fooling him with our piety, he knows what is in our hearts, what we're up to and he comes barreling in our lives to do just that. To overthrow, strip away any mark of worthiness in the convenience. Jesus overturns the tables and restores faith.

He doesn't say bring your animals from home, use the right money, he says tear this temple down and I will rebuild it. Zeal for you consumes him. The will to save his people from their sin, to save us from ourselves drives him to overturn everything that comes between us and him.

When we do destroy the temple of his body, even then, he will not be stopped. He has something new, something better, something everlasting in store for us.

The peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Hymn: "Built on a Rock"

Concordia #81

Prayer of the Church: Each prayer will end: Lord, in your mercy. **C: Hear our prayer.**

Holy Communion

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts to the Lord.

C: We lift up our hearts unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is meet and right so to do. P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give praise to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God through Jesus Christ our Lord. You call your people to repent of sin and prepare for the joy of the paschal feast, Renews us in faith and holiness and bring us into the fullness of your grace and truth that belongs to the children of God. Therefore, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name; evermore praising you and singing:

C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Invitation/Distribution

Thanksgiving-

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Let us give thanks and pray: We thank you Lord God almighty that you have refreshed us with these gifts; and we ask you, in your mercy, to strengthen us through these same gifts in faith toward you and in fervent love for one another; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

C: Amen.

Benediction

P: Now may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us his peace.

C: Amen, Amen, Amen.

Doxology

C: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Dismissal: P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God! Postlude**