

Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish
Order of Sunday Worship- Fourth Sunday after Epiphany– January 28th, 2024
At Sauk Valley 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:

“Rock of Ages”

Praise #315

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:

C: O God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us!

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us!

O God the Holy Spirit, true Comforter, have mercy upon us!

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: Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm-111

First Reading- Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Second Reading- 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

Gospel Reading- Mark 1:21-28

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:

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

Praise #349

Sermon

Pastor Lexy Carson

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

A number of years ago, for my husband Jesse's birthday I took him to a Twins game. I want to emphasize that at that point, I know very little about baseball at all. When we got there, we were walking around the stadium and this very tall gentleman came walking down the stairs and my husband greets him by name "Hi Dick!" He responded back excitedly, "hi how are you doing?" and went along his way. Once we walked a few steps I said you know him? He said of course, that's Dick Bremmer! How do you not know Dick?! Well I know him by name now and thanks to a parishioner here I have even gotten to read his book.

It means a lot to know someone by their name. If you know someone's name, you know a key piece about who they are. It is meaningful to have someone address you by name, they know you, they recognize you, they see you. It's typically pretty special when someone knows you by name.

In our text for today, Jesus is greeted by name by a man with an unclean spirit. This individual shouts out to Jesus "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

This demon is trying to appeal to Jesus. I know you, I recognize you as Jesus from Nazareth and that you are the Holy One of God. I know your identity as divine. This demon is trying to flatter Christ. As if Christ was some celebrity seeking the limelight. While the demon is correct about who Jesus is, flattery and attempted ego building will get him nowhere.

Christ did not come to seek glory and attention. He did not come to be bowed down before. He did not come for fame and fortune. He has no interest in any of the such.

Jesus was interested in the man whom the demon possessed. He wanted to free this individual from the demon. While the demon sought to flatter and distract Jesus, to keep a hold on the individual he was possessing. Christ would have none of it. He has come to free the possessed.

How Jesus frees the possessed is by giving them a promise. To receive a promise you need to hear it in your own ear. The issue is this individual could not hear Christ. He was demon possessed and this demon was blocking his ability to hear what Jesus had to say to him.

So Christ gets to work in the business he actually came for. To free sinners. How he does this is by rebuking the demon. To rebuke is literally shutting the mouth of the demon. To cut it off, silence it.

Throughout all of the New Testament Christ is fulfilling the prophecies laid out by the prophets of the Old Testament. Prophecies laid out so the people will know when the messiah, the savior has come. For example the OT laid out that John the Baptist would point the way, that the savior would come from the line of David and that our prophecy fulfilled in today's gospel comes from Malachi 3. One day one will come who knows how to rebuke and it will work. They will shut the mouths of the powers who try to withhold the Gospel.

The prophecy of Malachi is fulfilled. Christ says "Be silent and come out of him" and that is exactly what happens. What Christ says always happens. His promise is true.

The crowds are amazed, one with authority has come whom even evil spirits have no power over. Even the impure obey. I have a professor that says you raise your kids telling them not to say shut up to their siblings, they have to save that for the unclean spirits. So that's one of my greatest pieces of parenting advice from a dear professor of mine.

So sitting here today you may be wondering what does this demon possessed individual have to do with me? I'm surely not demon possessed. Well, there is plenty in this vast world that tries to have a hold on you. Christ comes and shuts the voices of anything that tries to get in your ear besides his promise. The media, advertisements, sales, the threat of death, even yourself. He comes and he shuts that voice up. Christ comes to set you free. To silence all lying voices, all unclean spirits, anything that tries to separate you from God.

Today Jesus comes to give you a promise, the same promise he gave to the demon possessed man. Christ is here, he has brought his kingdom and his word is true. What Christ says happens, even what he tells the unclean spirits to shut up. They do. They are completely silenced. No one has power over Christ and Christ's word never returns empty. It always, always does what he says.

All voices are silenced except Christ's. His voice speaks to you, to give you a promise. You are free, all voices except mine are silenced. Your Savior knows you by name and not as a way to try to gain favor with you. He knows you by name because he is your God, your Savior and who brings you peace. Peace from all other voices telling you lies, lies that you are not good enough, lies that you need to do more, lies that you need to buy this. All lies are silenced.

Christ is here, today for you. You are his and he is your Savior.

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

Hymn:

“Softly and Tenderly”

Praise #301

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. And now we praise you that, you have sent to us your only begotten Son, and that in him, being found in the form of a man, you have revealed the fulness of your glory.

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**