

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Lent 2 - February 28, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #234 - "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"

**Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear now to his temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!**

**Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen all that is needful has been
Sent by his gracious ordaining?**

**Praise to the Lord, who has fearfully, wondrously, made you,
Health has bestowed and, when heedlessly falling, has stayed you.
What need or grief ever has failed of relief?
Wings of his mercy did shade you.**

**Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you;
Surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend you.
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
As with his love he befriends you.**

**Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again;
Gladly forever adore him!**

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

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 in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Genesis 28:10-17

Jacob set out from Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. He came to a certain place and decided to spend the night there, because the sun had set. He took one of the stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down to sleep in that place. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway set up on the earth with its top reaching to heaven. There were angels of God ascending and descending on it. There at the top stood the Lord, who said, "I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. The land on which you are lying, I give to you and to your descendants. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. Now, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back again into this land. Indeed, I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised to you." Jacob woke up from his sleep, and he said, "Certainly the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and he said, "How awe-inspiring is this place! This is nothing other than the house of God, and this is the gate to heaven." (EHV)

Psalm 73

Refrain: Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he will be my Savior.

**I am always with 'you, O LORD;
You hold me by my 'right hand.**

**You guide me with your 'counsel,
And afterward you will take me into 'glory.**

**Whom have I in heav'en but you?
And earth has nothing I desire be'sides you.**

**My flesh and my 'heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for'ever.**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son
And to the Holy 'Spirit,
As it was in the be'ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

**Refrain: Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be
afraid. For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense, and he
will be my Savior.**

Second Lesson: Romans 5:1-11

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we also have obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand. And we rejoice confidently on the basis of our hope for the glory of God. Not only this, but we also rejoice confidently in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces patient endurance, and patient endurance produces tested character, and tested character produces hope. And hope will not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who was given to us. For at the appointed time, while we were still helpless, Christ died for the ungodly. It is rare indeed that someone will die for a righteous person. Perhaps someone might actually go so far as to die for a person who has been good to him. But God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Therefore, since we have now been justified by his blood, it is even more certain that we will be saved from God's wrath through him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, it is even more certain that, since we have been reconciled, we will be saved by his life. And not only is this so, but we also go on rejoicing confidently in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received this reconciliation. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

The Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things; be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the experts in the law; be killed; and after three days rise again. He was speaking plainly to them. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But after turning around and looking at his disciples, Jesus rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You do not have your mind set on the things of God, but the things of men." He called the crowd and his disciples together and said to them, "If anyone wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. After all, what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? In fact, whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (EHV)

The 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.

Hymn #392 - "Not unto Us"

**Not unto us, not unto us be glory, Lord;
Not unto us but to your name be praise;
Not unto us but to your name all honor be giv'n
For matchless mercy, forgiveness, and grace.**

**Amazing grace - that chose us e'er the worlds were made;
Amazing grace - that sent your Son to save;**

**Amazing grace - that robed us in your righteousness
And taught our lips to sing glory and praise.**

**O faithful love - that shepherded through faithless years;
Forgiving love - that led us to your truth;
Unyielding love - that would not let us turn from you
But sent us forth to speak pardon and peace.**

**Not unto us but to your name be glory, Lord,
For grace so rich, so wide, so high, so free.
Abide with us till trav'ling days are over and done,
And pilgrim feet lead us home, Lord, to you.**

**The Sermon: Genesis 28:10-17
 “Open Your Eyes, And See The Vision”**

“**Look** before you **leap**” is pretty good advice, and it can save us from experiencing all kinds of trouble. I’m sure you can think of occasions when you were involved with things you hadn’t fully **investigated**, or didn’t fully **understand**. But sometimes in our **self-reliance**, we decide to give it a try just the same - to **leap** before we **look**. The child who always wants to “do it **himself**” frequently ends up with a **mess** on his hands. When we forge ahead in uncertain situations, **sometimes** they work out just **fine**, but all too often they bring us great **pain** and **sorrow**. Most of those problems could be **avoided** if we would only **wake up**, and realize that we **can’t** do everything by ourselves - if we would just **seek advice** from a friend who has more **experience** - or perhaps if we would take it to the **LORD** in **prayer**. The patriarch **Jacob** was no **stranger** to being **self-reliant**, or **leaping** before he **looked**, and it took a special **vision** from **God Himself**, to wake him up, and to clarify his understanding.

Today we’re going to investigate our text using the theme: **Open Your Eyes, And See The Vision**. God has clearly shown his gracious **love** for us by providing for **all** our needs. And that gracious **love** calls for a clear **response** from us.

Thanks to our Sunday Schools and Lutheran Elementary Schools, the account of Jacob’s journey to Haran, and his vision of a ladder or stairway reaching to heaven, is one of the more **familiar** stories from the Old Testament. Consider the circumstances which **led up** to the events of our text. Jacob had incurred the **wrath** of his brother, Esau, by tricking him out of his **birthright**. Esau was **angry** - angry enough to even **kill** Jacob, when the time was right. So, in order to save the

family from the **evils** which could result from this feud, Rebekah suggested that Jacob would go to Haran and find a **wife**. Isaac **agreed**, especially because he had **not** been pleased with the two **Hittite** women whom **Esau** had married. Jacob lost no time in **leaving**, and no doubt he traveled **alone**, in order to be able to move more **quickly**.

There were certainly a number of unanswered **questions** which were **plaguing** Jacob at this time. For example, would he ever see his **parents** again, especially his ailing father? Would **Esau** hunt him down and **kill** him after his father's impending death? And would he **ever** be able to **return** to his homeland again? Certainly, Jacob understood that **he himself** was **responsible** for all these questions. He had relied on his **own** reason, and that **reason** had let him **down**, and had led him into **sin**. **Jacob himself** was the one who had plotted to **steal** his brother's birthright. He **himself** had stood before his father and **lied**, claiming to be Esau. Jacob **knew** that what he had been doing was **wrong**, and now he was suffering the **consequences** of his sin.

But, I think it's important for us to **note** here that in spite of all these **questions**, there was **one** thing which was **not** doubtful for Jacob. He knew where he stood with his **father**, Isaac. Before Jacob left for Haran, he once again received his father's **blessing** - the **same** blessing which he had **stolen** from his brother, Esau. Even though **Esau** had been Isaac's **favorite**, Isaac **knew** that **Jacob** was really supposed to be the bearer of the **Promise**. Isaac wasn't angry about the way Jacob had **deceived** him, nor did he carry a **grudge**. Instead, he made it clear to Jacob that **God almighty** would continue to be **with** him, and to **bless** him richly - with a special **land**, with a multitude of **people**, and with the promise of the **Savior**.

And that brings us to our text for today. The text begins, "*Jacob set out from Beersheba and traveled toward Haran. He came to a certain place and decided to spend the night there, because **the sun had set**. He took one of the stones from that place, put it under his head, and lay down to **sleep** in that place.*" At the time of our text, it's clear that Jacob had already been traveling for several days, because the journey from Beersheba to Luz covered about 70 miles. This wasn't a place where Jacob had **planned** to stop. We're simply told that he had run out of **daylight**, and it was time to **rest**. However, in a very short time, Jacob would come to realize what a **special** place this really was.

Our text continues, "*He had a **dream** in which he saw a **stairway** set up on the earth with its top reaching to **heaven**. There were **angels** of God **ascending** and*

descending on it. There at the top stood the Lord, who said, 'I am the **Lord**, the God of your father **Abraham** and the God of **Isaac**.'” The things which Jacob saw in this dream were totally unexpected. Three times Moses uses a word which calls attention to this fact. We could paraphrase the words of Moses by saying, “Jacob was dreaming and - oh, a **stairway!** - and **angels!** - and look, there’s the **LORD Himself!**”

What a spectacular **sight!** God had **Opened His Eyes, To See A Vision**. He had come to Jacob in the same way He had come to Abraham and Isaac in the past. What a **stairway!** God was showing Jacob that He is **connected** with this world. God’s angels **ascend** to heaven, bringing Jacob’s needs and requests to God - and then they also **descend** to the earth, bringing Jacob the help and assurance from God which he so desperately needed. And what a **message!** God Himself said, “*The **land** on which you are lying, I give to **you** and to your **descendants**. Your **descendants** will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. In you and in your seed **all the families of the earth** will be blessed. Now, I am **with** you and will **watch over** you wherever you go, and I will **bring you back** again into this land. Indeed, I will not **leave** you until I have done what I have **promised** to you.” All the things which Jacob **wanted** in life - all of the things which he had **stolen** from his brother - the **land**, the **descendants**, and the **Savior** - **all** of them were now being promised to him by the **LORD Himself** - along with the guarantee of the **LORD’s protection** to boot!*

No wonder Jacob was struck with **awe**. It should be **obvious** that Jacob didn’t **deserve** all of this. He didn’t deserve **any** of this. Jacob was a plotting, scheming, lying **sinner**. He **deserved** to be punished with **death** for his greed and selfishness. But God **loved** him - God wanted him to **live** - and God **reassured** him. Jacob would suffer the **physical** consequence of being separated from his **family** for a while, but the **LORD** would **spare** him from the **spiritual** consequence of being separated from **God** forever.

We don’t stack up any **better** than Jacob did. We also need to **Open Our Eyes, And See The Vision**. Of course, God doesn’t come to us in dreams, showing us a stairway to heaven. But He **does** come to us. God **daily** provides **everything** we need for our bodily welfare. If you **doubt** that, because COVID has severely affected our **economy**, and it isn’t what it was back in the 90’s, then just look at a few of the simple “basics” in our lives. Even King Solomon with all his wealth never tasted frozen orange juice, or used a cellphone, or drove a chariot that would compare to the ones parked in our church parking lot today. No matter how **little**

we might **think** we have, we have far **more** than most people in our world today can even **imagine**. God has been **very** good to us, and all we need to do is **open our eyes** in order to **see** His blessings to us.

And those are just the **physical** blessings. **Spiritually** we have been blessed even **more** greatly. Imagine how greatly the prophets of old, and even the angels in heaven would have rejoiced, to know the things even our youngest **children** know about our **Savior** - the details of His **birth** - the miracles performed during His public **ministry** - and especially the events involving His **suffering, death, and resurrection**. We are so **blessed** to be able to read God's Word **daily** in our homes - to have our **children** taught that Word **daily** in our Lutheran Schools - to study that Word and worship God **weekly** in a beautiful building like this one - and to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper **regularly** for the forgiveness of our sins. **Open Your Eyes, and See The Blessings** which the LORD has so generously showered on us.

When Jacob woke up from his dream, he **immediately** responded. In the verses which **follow** our text we're told, "*Jacob got up early in the morning. He took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a sacred **memorial stone** and poured **oil** on top of it. He named that place **Bethel**. (Before this, the name of the city had been Luz.) Jacob **took a vow**, 'If God will be with me to keep me safe on this journey I am making, and **if** he gives me food to eat and clothing to put on, and I come back to my father's house in safety, the Lord will be **my God**, and this stone that I have set up as a memorial stone will be **God's house**, and I will certainly give you **a tenth** of everything that you give me.'*" What does that **mean**? It means that Jacob built a house of **God** - a place to **worship** the LORD - today we would call it a **church**. It was obvious to Jacob that God deserved to be **worshiped** by him, because God **had** done, and would **continue** to do, so **much** for him.

And then we're told that Jacob also made a **vow** - a **promise**. His statement contained an **if** clause, and a **then** clause. In fact, it almost sounds as if Jacob was making a **bargain** with God - **if** You do this for **me**, then **I** will do that for **You**. But the **context** of his vow makes that **impossible**. Jacob was absolutely **sure** that the LORD would do all those things for him. The vision which he had just seen had vividly **verified** it for him. Therefore, it would be better to translate his statement **this** way: "**Since** God will be with me ... then I will do these things." Jacob made his vow in **response** to God's grace. **Because** God watched over him, and provided for him, and protected him - Jacob **worshiped** the LORD, built a **church** for Him, and gave Him a **tenth** of all his possessions.

How will **we** respond to God's grace in **our** lives? Well, that's entirely up to **you**. But like **Jacob**, we should be sure to **begin** our response with **worship**. In **worship** our God gives **His best** to us, and we also give **our best** to **Him**. Our **worship** demonstrates how much God is **worth** to us. So, when He receives the **highest priority** in our lives - when God comes **first** in our lives - then all the **other** things; things like our time, talents, and treasure - all **these** things will naturally **follow**. Jacob didn't build a **church** for the LORD or return a **tenth** of all his possessions to the LORD because he **had** to - he did it because he **wanted** to. Jacob recognized it as his **privilege**, and it brought him great **joy**. May we willingly follow his example. Amen.

Prayers:

O God our heavenly Father, You have forever demonstrated Your **love** for us sinners, because when we were **powerless** to save ourselves, You sent **Jesus** to die in our place. **Forgive** our sins for the sake of His blood, and **spare** us. With confident joy we **praise** You, the Rock of our Salvation. We come into Your presence with **thanksgiving**.

O precious Savior Jesus Christ, You chose the path of the **cross** because of Your love - for the **Father** and for **us**. We ask that You would **ease** our load of suffering and sorrow by virtue of the **love** You have shown to us, and the hope of immortal **glory** You have given to us. Yet, as **You** were glad to obey the will of Your Father, in order to save us from our sins, may **we also** be filled with a spirit of loving **obedience** that delights in doing His will, even if that means carrying a heavy **burden**. Teach us to know our **needs** and our **shortcomings**, that we may always pray to the Father in Your name for **every** needed blessing. Teach us to recognize our **sins**, so that we will daily **confess** them, and find **forgiveness** from You. Teach us Your new commandment that we may learn to **love** one **another** as You love **us**.

O Holy Spirit, You have been sent into our hearts just as Jesus **promised**. Use our meditation on His sufferings to deepen our **understanding** of divine love, and to increase our **appreciation** for the sacrifice He made. Lead **all** Christian pastors to preach the crucified **Savior** with unswerving loyalty, and bless the hearts of their **hearers** with **faith**. **Humble** those who are **self-righteous**, **strengthen** doubting hearts, and **rekindle** faith that is growing cold. **Redirect** the lives of those who have started down the path of **sin**. **Awaken** those who are spiritually **asleep**, and **restore** the blessed truths of the Holy Scriptures to those who have fallen into **error**. Spirit of God, apply the precious blood of Jesus to **all** of our sins, that we

may be perfectly **cleansed** from those sins, and be found to be **acceptable** in the eyes of our Father in heaven. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Sung).

**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.**

Hymn #444 - *"If You But Trust in God to Guide You"*

**If you but trust in God to guide you
And place your confidence in him,
He'll give you strength and stand beside you
When days are dreary, dark, and dim.
For those who trust his changeless love
Build on the rock that does not move.**

**How can these anxious worries aid you,
These never-ceasing moans and sighs?
Will not his wings of mercy shade you
Whenever troubled times arise?
Our cross and trials do but press
The heavier for our bitterness.**

**Be patient and await his leisure
In cheerful hope, with heart content;
Then take whate'er your Father's pleasure
And his discerning love have sent.
Doubt not; your inmost wants are known
To him who chose you for his own.**

**Sing, pray, and keep his ways unswerving,
Perform your duties faithfully,
And trust his Word; though undeserving,
You'll find his promise true to be.
God never yet forsook in need
The soul that trusted him indeed.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

The Blessing:

P: 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: **Amen.**

Hymn #492 - "Son of God, Eternal Savior"

**Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us,
Honors all our human race,
You our head, who, throned in glory,
For your own will ever plead:
Fill us with your love and pity;
Heal our wrongs and help our need.**

**Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of love and Prince of Peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion;
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst for pleasure;
Stem our selfish greed for gain.**

**Bind us all as one together
In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy,
Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow?
Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken?
Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.**

**As you, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted;
Freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.**