

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Lent 4 - March 22, 2020

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 #533 - "I Love Your Kingdom, Lord"

**I love your kingdom, Lord,
The place of your abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.**

**Beyond my highest joy
I prize its heav'nly ways,
Its sweet communion, solemn vows,
Its hymns of love and praise.**

**I love your Church, O God,
Your saints in ev'ry land,
Dear as the apple of your eye
And graven on your hand.**

**For them my tears shall fall;
For them my prayers ascend;
For them my cares and toils be giv'n
Till toils and cares shall end.**

**Sure as your truth shall last,
To Zion shall be giv'n
The brightest glories earth can yield
And brighter bliss of heav'n.**

Confession of Sins:

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: Hosea 5:15 - 6:3

I will go. I will return to my place until they admit their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will earnestly seek me. Come, let us return to the LORD. For he has torn us to pieces, but he will heal us. He has struck us, but he will bandage our wounds. After two days he will revive us. On the third day he will raise us up, so that we may live in his presence. Let us acknowledge the LORD. Let us pursue knowledge of the LORD. As surely as the sun rises, the LORD will appear. He will come to us like a heavy rain, like the spring rain that waters the earth. (EHV)

Psalm 42-43:

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

**As the deer pants for streams of water,
So my soul pants for you, O God.**

**My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
Where can I go and meet with God?**

**Why are you downcast, O my soul?
Why so disturbed within me?**

**Put your hope in God,
For I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.**

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

**Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me,
Let them bring me to the place where you dwell.**

**Then will I go to the altar of God, my joy and my delight.
I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.**

**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: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Second Lesson: Romans 8:1-10

So then, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. Indeed, what the law was unable to do, because it was weakened by the flesh, God did, when he sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to deal with sin. God condemned sin in his flesh, so that the righteous decree of the law would be fully satisfied in us who are not walking according to the flesh, but according to the spirit. To be sure, those who are in harmony with the sinful flesh think about things the way the sinful flesh does, and those in harmony with the spirit think about things the way the spirit does. Now, the way the sinful flesh thinks results in death, but the way the spirit thinks results in life and peace. For the mind-set of the sinful flesh is hostile to God, since it does not submit to God's law, and in fact, it cannot. Those who are in the sinful flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the sinful flesh but in the spirit, if indeed God's Spirit lives in you. And if someone does not have the Spirit of Christ, that person does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but your spirit is alive because of righteousness. (EHV)

Verse of the Day:

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.

Gospel: Matthew 20:17-28

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside; and on the way he said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and experts in the law, and they will condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock, flog, and

crucify him. On the third day he will be raised.” Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to him with her sons, kneeling and asking something of him. He said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Promise that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right hand and one on your left hand.” But Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” They said to him, “We are.” He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not for me to give; rather these places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” When the ten heard this, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It will not be that way among you. Instead whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you will be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (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 #484 - “*Brothers, Sisters, Let Us Gladly*”

**Brothers, sisters, let us gladly give to God our all, our best
Service hearty, thorough, honest, with a living love impressed.
All our duty, all our striving, all our time to him belong;
Praise him, then, with true devotion, come before him with a song.**

**By his mercy, by his bounty, by the gift of Christ, his Son,
What great goodness he has shown us, what high marvels he has done!**

**Let us to him promptly, freely, yield our bodies and our souls,
Thankful that his love protects us, that his wisdom all controls.**

**Gracious Lord, accept our service for the sake of Christ, your Son,
Lo, our hope abides now only in the righteousness he won.
Bless and save us; help and guide us; watch to comfort and restore
Till in heav'n we rest rejoicing, praising you forevermore.**

**The Sermon: Matthew 20:17-28
 "Be Careful What You Ask"**

What would it be like to have all your **dreams** come **true**? That's what happens in a wonderful little movie called Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. It's all about a very **strange** old man named, **Willie Wonka**, who makes the most wonderful chocolate in the world; and a very **poor** but **loving** little boy named **Charlie**, who became the **heir** to his chocolate factory - along with all its chocolate-making secrets. As if to **warn** Charlie not to let things get out of hand, at the end of the movie Willie Wonka says, "Charlie, **remember** what happened to the man who suddenly had all his dreams come true." Do **you** remember what happened? With a wink of his eye and a smile on his face, Mr. Wonka said, "He lived **happily** ever after!"

But it doesn't **always** work out that way. I'm sure you've heard the **horror** stories about people who literally had their lives **destroyed** after having their **dreams** come **true**, by winning millions of dollars in a **lottery**. As strange as it may seem, sometimes **getting** everything we ever **wanted** can be more of a **curse** than a **blessing**. So, when you're making your requests known to God about things which are uncertain, **Be Careful What You Ask**. Don't get your hopes up too **high**, because you might not **get** it. And at the same time, remember that there are times when things could turn out even **worse** if you **did** get what you asked.

Our text **begins** as Jesus and His disciples are on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem. We read, "*As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be **betrayed** to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to **death** and will turn Him over to the Gentiles to be **mocked** and **flogged** and **crucified**. On the third day, He will be **raised to life**.'*" This was the third and **final** announcement which Jesus made to His disciples regarding His impending suffering, death, and resurrection. And as those events drew **nearer**, Jesus' description of them became more and more **detailed**. Jesus wanted His

disciples to be well **prepared** for the things which were about to happen.

It was in front of this backdrop that the **mother** of James and John came to Jesus with a **request**. *“Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at Your **right** and the other at Your **left** in Your kingdom.”* She is here called the mother of the sons of Zebedee. At other times she is called **Salome**, or the sister of Jesus’ mother, Mary. In reality, it was not **only** Salome who was making this request, but **James** and **John** were involved too. They thought they **understood** what they were asking, but Jesus later tells us that they **didn’t** understand. Since they were coming to Jesus with a request in an **uncertain** matter, they needed to **Be Careful What They Asked**. Even though they recognized Jesus’ power to **fulfill** their prayers, they couldn’t get their hopes up too high, because there was always the possibility that Jesus **might** say **no**, and **refuse** to grant their request. Perhaps they thought that Salome, Jesus’ **aunt**, might help to pave the way for a **positive** response from Jesus.

What James and John **did** understand was that sitting on the right and left side of the **king** was a position of **honor** in the royal court. Sitting on the immediate **right** of the ruler was the spot for the **second** in command, and the person sitting on his immediate **left** was to be **next** in line. While the request of James and John seems to be a very **selfish** and **presumptuous** one, yet it’s not **completely** without merit. Let’s look at it from the **positive** side. Jesus had just been talking about how important it is to have a **childlike faith** in Him - a faith which trusts Him **completely**. In asking Jesus to give them these important positions in His kingdom, James and John were expressing their **confidence** in the **reality** of that kingdom - even though it didn’t **appear** to be much of a kingdom at **all** at that time. The fact that **Salome** is involved in the request on behalf of her sons can be viewed in a positive light as **well**. Out of all the titles and positions which her sons **could** seek in this world, she had encouraged them to **follow Jesus** - to serve **Him** and His **Church** with their lives.

However, it is the **negative** side of their request which jumps out at us in our text. Their request can easily be viewed as being very **arrogant** and **self-serving**. Through their mother, James and John came to Jesus asking Him to grant them a **favor** - and **time** was running out. They knew that Jesus was headed to Jerusalem to **complete** His work - work which would result in great **glory** - and **whatever** that glory involved, they wanted to be **part** of it. Perhaps James and John thought they **deserved** the number 2 and 3 positions in Jesus’ kingdom because they made up 2/3 of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples. At any rate, it is very clear that they viewed these high positions as ways to **be** served, rather than to **serve**.

It also seems that the other **ten** disciples had made the same **mistake**. Our text continues, “*When the **ten** heard about this, they were **indignant** with the two brothers.*” The “sons of **thunder**” had caused quite a **rumble** among the other disciples. Why? Well, perhaps they were upset because James and John had beaten them to the punch! There were only a **few** of those top spots in Jesus’ kingdom, and no doubt **each** of the disciples had been hoping to **receive** one of them. But, James and John were the ones who asked **first**. As a result, the other ten disciples **condemned** their actions. Yet, if Peter and Andrew, or Philip and Nathaniel had gotten to Jesus first, I’m sure they would have made a **similar** request, and would have presented a noble attempt to **justify** their request - and so would **we**. Isn’t it interesting how **easy** it is for us to **condemn** in **others**, the very same things which we **excuse** in **ourselves**!

James and John had not been **careful** in what they asked - and Jesus **seems** to have turned them down. The **fact** of the matter is that Jesus said, “*To sit at My **right** or **left** is not for **Me** to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by My **Father**.*” Perhaps they **had** been prepared for James and John - or for two of the **other** disciples - perhaps they had **not**. But in any case, Jesus quickly pointed out to them that where they **sit** in His kingdom really isn’t all that **important**. Greatness in the **world** is measured in terms of **authority**, and the way that authority is **exercised** over others. But greatness in **Jesus’** kingdom is measured in terms of **service** to **others**, not **authority** for **oneself**. Jesus said, “*Whoever wants to become **great** among you must be your **servant**, and whoever wants to be **first** must be your **slave** - just as the Son of Man did not come to **be served**, but to **serve**, and to give His **life** as a ransom for many.*” In their request for positions of **glory**, the disciples had been looking for **luxury** and **ease**. But instead, Jesus was telling them to expect to **serve others**, and to endure **pain**. No **service**, no **glory** - no **pain**, no **gain**.

James and John must have been **extremely** embarrassed. They had stuck their necks out in the hope of receiving positions of **glory** and **authority**, and Jesus told them they were barking up the wrong tree. What could be **worse** than that? Well, in view of the events which took place during **Holy Week**, we could say that it would have been **worse** if Jesus had said **yes** to their request. It was on **Good Friday** that Jesus received **glory** from God the Father, as He **died** on the **cross** to pay the **debt** which we owed for our **sins**. I wonder if James and John and Salome made the **connection**, that on Good Friday, there were two men who were **crucified** with Jesus - one had the position on His **right**, and the other on His **left**!

My dear friends, in one way or another we are all **indebted** to **others** for their strength, and support, and encouragement - whether it's to our parents, our friends, our employers, or someone else. But we are **especially** indebted to our Lord **Jesus** - not only for the things which He **does** for us, but also for the things which He **refuses** to do for us - by **denying** our requests, when we don't **understand** what we are really asking. The Lord knows **best**. He knows **what** we need, and He knows **when** we need it. Let's always **remember** that, especially when things don't **seem** to be going our way. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Prayers:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the **love** with which You loved us. You didn't **spare** Your only-begotten **Son**, but You sent Him to the **cross** to pay for our sins. You were pleased even to **forsake** Him for a time, so that with His **suffering**, He might endure the very **depths** of anguish for us. To establish Your everlasting **friendship** with us, You made Him whom You declared to be Your **beloved** Son, the object of Your **rejection**. We ask You, for **Jesus'** sake, to be at **peace** with us. **Forgive** us for the sake of His innocent suffering and death, and as You **once** sent Your Son to be our Savior, send Him **again** to reign in our hearts through faith.

Dearest Jesus, we confess that **our** sins, including our **selfishness**, brought You to the cross where You suffered for **every** sinner. At Your own invitation we take **refuge** in Your wounds, and seek **cleansing** in Your blood. By the sacrifice You made, stir us up to **love** You, and to do **good** works. Give us **patience** to endure tribulations, **strength** to resist temptations, **joy** to overcome sorrows, **love** to replace bitterness, **guidance** to keep us on the path of righteousness, **boldness** to seek Your help in prayer, and a **will** to seek **counsel** from Your holy Word. May we always look to You as the **Light** of Salvation, especially when we pass through the **dark** shadows of **death**.

O Holy Spirit, **author** of our faith, help us to remember the **sacrifice** Jesus made for us, lest failing to remember, we fall into **unbelief** and all kinds of **sin** and **vice**. Open our **mouths** to **bear witness** to our Savior's name. Open our **hearts** to **give generously** to the cause of Christian missions, and to the **relief** of those who suffer. Let the **joy** of our salvation in Jesus fill our **hearts** and **minds**, until that day when we **meet** Him in glory. We commend to Your care all those who are **afflicted**, all who need Your **help** and **encouragement**, and all who need Your **healing** - whether **physical**, or **spiritual**. Be with us now, and forever. Amen.

The 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.**

Hymn # 486 - *"Lord of Glory, You have Bought Us"*

**Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice,
And with that have freely given blessings countless as the sand
To th'unthankful and the evil with your own unsparing hand.**

**Grant us hearts, dear Lord, to give you gladly, freely, of your own.
With the sunshine of your goodness melt our thankless hearts of stone.
Till our cold and selfish natures, warmed by you, at length believe
That more happy and more blessed 'tis to give than to receive.**

**Wondrous honor you have given to our humblest charity
In your own mysterious sentence, "You have done it unto me."
Can it be, O gracious Master, that you need what we can do,
Saying by your poor and needy, "Give as I have giv'n to you"?**

**Yes, the sorrow and the suff'rings which on ev'ry hand we view
Channels are for gifts and off'rings due by solemn right to you.
Right of which we may not rob you, debt we may not choose but pay
Lest that face of love and pity turn from us another day.**

**Lord of glory, you have bought us with your lifeblood as the price,
Never grudging for the lost ones that tremendous sacrifice.
Give us faith to trust you boldly, hope, to stay our souls on you;
But, oh, best of all your graces, with your love our love renew.**

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 #426 - "*Yours Forever, God of Love*"

**Yours forever, God of love! Hear us from your throne above;
Yours forever may we be here and in eternity!**

**Yours forever, oh, how blest they who find in you their rest!
Savior, Guardian, heav'nly Friend, Oh, defend us to the end.**

**Yours forever, Lord of life! Shield us through our earthly strife.
You, the life, the truth, the way, guide us to the realms of day.**

**Yours forever! Shepherd, keep all your weak and trembling sheep
Safely in your tender care; let us all your goodness share.**

**Yours forever! You our guide, all our needs by you supplied,
All our sins by you forgiv'n, lead us, Lord, from earth to heav'n.**