

Welcome to Worship at  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI  
Lent 3 - March 7, 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 #221 - "Blessed Jesus, at Your Word"**

**Blessed Jesus, at your Word  
We are gathered all to hear you.  
Let our hearts and souls be stirred  
Now to seek and love and fear you,  
By your teachings, sweet and holy,  
Drawn from earth to love you solely.**

**All our knowledge, sense, and sight  
Lie in deepest darkness shrouded  
Till your Spirit breaks our night  
With the beams of truth unclouded.  
You alone to God can win us;  
You must work all good within us.**

**Gracious Savior, good and kind,  
Light from Light, from God proceeding,  
Open now our heart and mind;  
Help us by your Spirit's pleading.  
Hear the cry your people raises;  
Hear and bless our prayers and praises.**

**Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Praise to you and adoration!  
Grant that we your Word may trust,  
Confident of our salvation,  
While we here below must wander,  
Till we sing your praises yonder.**

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: Exodus 20:1-17**

Then God spoke all these words: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, where you were slaves. You shall have no other gods beside me. You shall not make any carved image for yourself or a likeness of anything in heaven above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow down to them or be subservient to them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God. I follow up on the guilt of the fathers with their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren, if they also hate me. But I show mercy to thousands who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not permit anyone who misuses his name to escape unpunished. Remember the Sabbath day by setting it apart as holy. Six days you are to serve and do all your regular work, but the seventh day shall be a sabbath rest to the Lord your God. Do not do any regular work, neither you, nor your sons or daughters, nor your male or female servants, nor your cattle, nor the alien who is residing inside your gates, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. In this way the Lord blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother so that you may spend many days on the land that the Lord your God is giving to you. You shall not commit murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor. (EHV)

**Psalm 19**

**Refrain: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**The heavens declare the glo'ry of God;  
The skies proclaim the work 'of his hands.**

**Their voice goes out into 'all the earth,  
Their words to the ends 'of the world.**

**Refrain: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**The law of the LORD is 'perfect,  
Giving joy 'to the heart.**

**The commands of the LORD are 'radiant,  
Giving light 'to the eyes.**

**They are more pre'cious than gold;  
They are sweeter than 'honey.**

**By them is your 'servant taught;  
In keeping them there is 'great reward.**

**Refrain: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**May the words of my mouth and the meditation 'of my heart  
Be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Re'deemer.**

**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: Lord, you have the words of everlasting life.**

**Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25**

Yes, Jews ask for signs, Greeks desire wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified - which is offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We preach Christ crucified, because the foolishness of God is wiser than

men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (EHV)

**Verse of the Day:** Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

**Gospel: John 2:13-22**

The Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and money changers sitting at tables. He made a whip of cords and drove everyone out of the temple courts, along with the sheep and oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those selling doves he said, “Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a place of business!” His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.” So the Jews responded, “What sign are you going to show us to prove you can do these things?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.” The Jews said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple! And you are going to raise it in three days?” But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. When Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this. Then they believed the Scripture and what Jesus had said. (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 #224 - “*God Himself Is Present*”**

**God himself is present - let us now adore him  
And with awe appear before him.**

**God is in his temple - all within keep silence,  
Humbly kneel in deepest rev'rence.  
He alone on his throne  
Is our God and Savior;  
Praise his name forever!**

**God himself is present - hear the harps resounding;  
See the hosts the throne surrounding.  
"Holy, holy, holy" - hear the hymn ascending,  
Songs of saints and angels blending.  
Bow your ear to us here:  
Hear, O Christ, the praises  
That your Church now raises.**

**Fount of ev'ry blessing, purify my spirit,  
Trusting only in your merit.  
Like the holy angels, worshiping before you,  
May I ceaselessly adore you.  
Let your will ever still  
Rule your church terrestrial  
As the hosts celestial.**

**The Sermon:      John 2:13-22  
                         "Be Zealous For God's Temple"**

The account of the Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus has made many people **uncomfortable** - perhaps even you. The point which causes the **rub**, is **anger**. The **angry** Jesus whom we see here appears to be quite **different** from the gentle and understanding Jesus whom we see in so many **other** places in the Bible. Therefore, the event has been pointed to by at least **some** individuals, to prove that Jesus was **not perfect**. Viewing the actions of Jesus from their own human perspective, they say, "Look at how **angry** He got! Look at how He **lost control**, and flew into a **rage!**" But such people are **wrong** in their deductions. Jesus was, is, and will remain **perfect** forever. What our text points out to us is that **anger**, in the right place, at the right time, and with the right motive; is **not** sinful. Yes, Jesus was **angry** - yes, Jesus **hated** - but He did not hate **people**. He hated their sinful **actions**. Christ's anger flowed out of **love** for those people, and for God's house. He loved those **individuals** too deeply to let them continue **harming** their immortal souls with such blatant, open sin; and He loved God's **temple** too much to allow it to be defiled and desecrated.

What an example! If only **we** had that kind of **Zeal For God's Temple**. Too often we show **apathy**, or even **disdain** for God's temple, as the people did in Christ's day. But Jesus shows us a zeal for His temple that we would do well to imitate. **Be Zealous For God's Temple**. Show your zeal in the way you **worship**, and show your zeal in the way you live the **rest** of your life as well.

It was again the time of the Jewish **Passover** - a seven-day festival which was ushered in by the celebration of the Passover **meal**. Every Jewish male age twelve and older was expected to attend that festival at the temple in Jerusalem. And so they came from all over the land - rich and poor, from the country and from the cities. They went **up** to Jerusalem. Why? Actually, if you were going to Jerusalem the only way you could **go** was up. Jerusalem stands about 2,500 feet **above** sea level, while the area surrounding the city drops to about 680 feet **below** sea level. So, it was a **long, hard** climb - almost 3/4 of a mile **uphill** - and of course, many of the people were traveling on **foot**.

Even **Gentiles** came. In fact, a special area had been built for the Gentiles in the temple complex, since they were not **allowed** to enter into the actual **sanctuary** itself. It was in this **outer court** which had been built for the Gentiles, that we find all the **action** taking place in our text. Not only were there **Gentiles** out there, but there were enterprising **businessmen**, with a wide array of sacrificial animals - oxen, sheep, and doves. I'm sure it had started out as a **convenience** for those who would have had a hard time bringing sacrificial animals along with them. But, just like most modern-day convenience stores, they charged the people **exorbitant** prices. And their business had grown to such large proportions that the entire area had become a virtual **stockyard** - and that was where the Gentiles were supposed to **worship**! Can you imagine trying to worship with cattle lowing and sheep bleating, in the midst of all the stench and filth of a stockyard? If the Jews had really **cared** about bringing the Gentiles into God's fold, they would have supplied them with a suitable place to **worship** God. But they **didn't** care. They were **apathetic**.

Then there were also the **money changers** - people who would take whatever currency the people brought with them, and would give them Jewish **shekels** in exchange. This too was a **service** to the worshipers, because only **Jewish** currency could be offered in the temple. However, they did not offer their services **free of charge** - and those who were **especially** greedy made use of these transactions to "rip off" many unsuspecting pilgrims through their unjust fees. Besides the fact that there was much **graft** involved, the animal sellers and the money changers were not **worshipping** inside the temple where they **belonged**. To

make a little play on words, they were more concerned about turning a **profit** (p-r-o-f-i-t), than they were about hearing a **prophet** (p-r-o-p-h-e-t)!

That's the kind of apathy **we** must be on our guard against, especially during the Lenten Season. When we have church services **twice** a week, doesn't it become easy for us to say, "Oh no, not **another** church service!" And, do you perhaps find yourself wondering, "Why do I have to go to church so **often**? When I'm at church so much, I barely have any time left to do the **other** things I want to do." When we feel that way, we must remember that **all** worship services - and **especially** Midweek Lenten services - have a very special **purpose**. They are not meant to be a **burden** or a **chore** for us. Rather, they are meant to offer us a special opportunity to **meditate** on the cross of Christ - to think about the suffering and pain which He endured for our sake. These are times when the work of Jesus is brought especially **close** to our hearts, so that we may **thank** Him, and **praise** Him, and **worship** Him for His great mercy toward us.

Jesus was well aware of the purpose which the **temple** was meant to serve. Jesus said, "*My house will be called a house of **prayer**, but you are making it a den of **robbers**.*" And Jesus was **not** apathetic in regard to what had **happened** in His Father's house. He **cleansed** the temple by driving **out** those who profaned it, and thus fulfilled the Messianic prophecy of **Malachi** who wrote, "*He will be seated like a **refiner** and a **purifier** of silver. He will **purify** the sons of Levi and **refine** them like gold and like silver.*" Notice that Jesus didn't **punish** those people with His homemade whip. He didn't attempt to beat them into **submission** either. Rather, Jesus drove the evil ones out of **His temple** - a place which was meant to be a place for **worship**. And they didn't **resist** Him either. They **couldn't** - because Jesus is the **all-powerful** Son of God.

We would think that the religious **leaders** would have been extremely **grateful** to Jesus for this cleansing - but instead, we find them seeking a **sign**, and **questioning** His authority! In reality, the cleansing **was** a sign all by itself. But Jesus gave them **another** sign too - one which would be fulfilled some three years later. He said, "*Destroy this **temple**, and in three days I will **raise** it up again.*" We don't know whether Jesus used any body language when He spoke these words, but if He did, I would be rather surprised. This statement was meant to be a **veiled** sign - a **paradox** - a message which has **two** meanings. But the religious leaders **obviously** missed the point. They were so blinded that they could only see **one** meaning - namely, the temple which had just been **cleansed**. And they were **outraged**. It took us **46 years** to build this temple, and now You say that **You** are going to rebuild it in just **3 days**? That's utter **nonsense** - completely **impossible** -

totally **insolent** - and they would see to it that Jesus **paid** for His insolence too. Three years later, false witnesses would **twist** Jesus' words, making it sound as if Jesus had said that **He** would destroy the temple, and not **they**.

They didn't **understand** what John very **clearly** tells us. Jesus was **not** speaking about the earthly temple **building**. He was speaking about His **body**. The building was only a **type** - a **symbol** pointing to Christ. The 9th and 10th chapters of the Book of Hebrews clearly point that out for us as well. This Jesus would offer the one supreme **Sacrifice** - His own life - and in doing so, would **cleans**e the temple of **our** bodies with His **blood**. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "**You are the temple of the living God, just as God said: 'I will live and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'**"

Jesus not only cleansed the temple in **Jerusalem**, but He also cleansed our **hearts**. And after He **completed** His house-cleaning within us - washing away our **sin** by the waters of Holy **Baptism**, getting rid of the **filth** and **stench** - He then **refilled** our hearts with His **law**, lest Satan would return and find our hearts **empty**. The Ten Commandments, recorded for us in today's 1st Lesson, serve as a **guide** for our life - a guide which will constantly remind us to **Be Zealous For God's Temple**. As Christians, we ourselves will strive to be **zealous** in these two ways. First, by **gladly worshiping** the LORD at **every** opportunity, making the best possible use of this **feast** which God is giving us for the nourishment of our souls in His **Word** and **Sacrament**. And then we will **also** strive to **Be Zealous For God's Temple** by striving to keep our bodies, which are God's **temple**, **free** from all types of **sin**. We will need **help**, but our help is already **here**. As the Psalmist said, "**Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth**" - and that LORD will **never** fail us. Amen.

### **Prayers:**

O Jesus, **innocent** Lamb of God, who volunteered to be cursed, punished, and even forsaken by God in **our** place; look on us with **mercy** and hear our **prayers** as we meditate on Your bitter suffering and death. Bring to Your people's minds in a **vivid** way, the **agony** that You suffered for our sake, and the spiritual **anguish** that You felt while bearing the burden of our guilt. Draw us in spirit back in time to witness the **blood** which You shed for us. Move us to seriously think about the **sacrifice** You made on our behalf, and help us to crucify **our** flesh with all its **wickedness**. Through Your perfect **obedience**, turn us from the path of **sin**, and help us to walk a **new** life as God's **obedient** children.



Dear Savior, **draw** us to You, just as on the cross You did for the dying **thief** on the cross **next** to You, so that we are led to accept with **joyful** hearts Your **blessing** of forgiveness, and treasure up the **sure** hope of **everlasting** life. As You prayed for those who **crucified** You, so also intercede for **us** with Your Heavenly Father. Remove from our hearts any **bitter** feelings that we may have toward others. Lead us to cling to Your cross in **faith**, so that it may be our **comfort** in our last hour, and death will hold no **terror** for us.

Lord, should You choose to **test** our faith by laying a heavy **cross** on us, give us the **grace** to bear it **patiently**, and fill us with **joy** in knowing that we are counted worthy to **suffer** for Your name. Give Your **strength** to us in our times of weakness, and grant that we will always find in You full **cleansing**, perfect **healing**, and lasting **peace**. 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 #386 - "*Now I Have Found the Firm Foundation*"**

**Now I have found the firm foundation  
Which holds my life forever sure;  
'Twas laid before the world's creation  
In Christ my Savior's wounds secure,  
Foundation which unmoved shall stay  
When heav'n and earth will pass away.**

**It is that mercy never ending,  
Which human wisdom far transcends,  
Of him who, loving arms extending,**

**To wretched sinners condescends.  
His heart with pity still will break  
Whether we seek him or forsake.**

**Our ruin God has not intended;  
For our salvation he has yearned.  
For this his Son to earth descended  
And then again to heav'n returned;  
For this so patient evermore  
He's knocking at our heart's closed door.**

**O depth of love, to me revealing  
The sea where my sins disappear!  
In Christ my wounds find perfect healing;  
There is no condemnation here!  
For Jesus' blood through earth and skies  
Forever "Mercy! Mercy!" cries.**

**Let mercy cause me to be willing  
To bear my lot and not to fret.  
While he my restless heart is stilling,  
May I this mercy not forget!  
Whatever comes my heart to test,  
His mercy is my only rest.**

**Lord, I will stand on this foundation  
As long as I on earth remain;  
This will engage my meditation  
While I the breath of life retain.  
And then, when face to face with you,  
I'll sing your mercy great and true.**

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 #456 - “Forth in Your Name, O Lord, I Go”**

**Forth in your name, O Lord, I go,  
My daily labor to pursue,  
Determined only you to know  
In all I think or speak or do.**

**Oh, let me cheerfully fulfill  
The task your wisdom has assigned  
And do your good and perfect will -  
In all my works your presence find!**

**May I find you at my right hand;  
Your eyes see truly what I do.  
I labor on at your command  
And offer all my works to you.**

**Give me to bear your easy yoke  
And ev’ry moment watch and pray  
And still to things eternal look  
And hasten to your glorious day.**

**For you I joyously employ  
Whatever you in grace have giv’n;  
I run my daily course with joy  
And closely walk with you to heav’n.**