

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

FEBRUARY 28, 2021

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER



PRELUDE *Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart* Setting: Johann Sebastian Bach

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #708 *Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart*

- 1 Lord, Thee I love with all my heart;  
I pray Thee, ne'er from me depart,  
With tender mercy cheer me.  
Earth has no pleasure I would share.  
Yea, heav'n itself were void and bare  
If Thou, Lord, wert not near me.  
And should my heart for sorrow break,  
My trust in Thee can nothing shake.  
Thou art the portion I have sought;  
Thy precious blood my soul has bought.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,  
Forsake me not! I trust Thy Word.
  
- 2 Yea, Lord, 'twas Thy rich bounty gave  
My body, soul, and all I have  
In this poor life of labor.  
Lord, grant that I in ev'ry place  
May glorify Thy lavish grace  
And help and serve my neighbor.  
Let no false doctrine me beguile;  
Let Satan not my soul defile.  
Give strength and patience unto me  
To bear my cross and follow Thee.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord, my God and Lord,  
In death Thy comfort still afford.
  
- 3 Lord, let at last Thine angels come,  
To Abr'ham's bosom bear me home,  
That I may die unfearing;  
And in its narrow chamber keep  
My body safe in peaceful sleep  
Until Thy reappearing.  
And then from death awaken me,  
That these mine eyes with joy may see,  
O Son of God, Thy glorious face,  
My Savior and my fount of grace.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer attend, my prayer attend,  
And I will praise Thee without end.

*INVOCATION*

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

*CALL TO WORSHIP*

Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful,  
**Slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**

Jesus said: If any man would come after me,  
**Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

Christ was wounded for our transgressions;  
**He was bruised for our iniquities.**

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS*

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another. (*silence for reflection and self-examination*)

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.  
**Amen.**

*KYRIE*

O God, Father in heaven, have mercy upon us.

**Your heart, O God, is grieved we know  
By every evil, every woe;  
Upon your cross-forsaken Son  
Our death is laid, and peace is won.**

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

**Your arms extend, O Christ, to save  
From sting of death and grasp of grave;  
Your scars before the Father move  
His heart to mercy at such love.**

O God, Holy Spirit, have mercy upon us.

**O lavish giver, come to aid  
The feeble child your grace has made.  
Now make us grow and help us pray;  
Bring joy and comfort; come to stay.**

*THE PRAYER OF THE DAY*

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Let us pray. O God,

**You see that of ourselves we have no strength. By Your mighty power defend us from all adversities that may happen to the body and from all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**



*FIRST LESSON*    Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.” Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, “Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

And God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*PSALM 22:23-31*

You who fear the LORD, praise him!

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him,  
and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!  
For he has not despised or abhorred  
the affliction of the afflicted,  
and he has not hidden his face from him,  
but has heard, when he cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will perform before those who fear him.  
The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD!  
May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD,  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before you.

For kingship belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.

All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
even the one who could not keep himself alive.

Posterity shall serve him;  
it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;  
they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,  
that he has done it.

**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.**

*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 have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*CHILDREN'S SERMON*

*GOSPEL VERSE #198 from One and All Rejoice O Come, Let Us Fix Our Eyes on Jesus*

O come, let us fix our eyes on Je - sus, the  
found-er and per - fect - er of our faith, who  
for the joy that was set be - fore Him en - dured the  
cross, de - spis - ing the shame, and is seat - ed at the  
right hand of the throne of God.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

And Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they told him, “John the Baptist; and others say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets.” And he asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Christ.” And he strictly charged them to tell no one about him.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again. And he said this plainly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and seeing his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

And he called to him the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ**

*SERMON*

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen.  
Dear friends in Christ:

Last Sunday we read about the temptation of Jesus, as we always do on the First Sunday in Lent. The account we read, from Mark’s Gospel, didn’t list the specific temptations Jesus faced. So, we mostly just focused on the topic of temptation in general.

By contrast, today’s reading suggests for us one very specific temptation that we should address. This is the temptation to think we can follow Jesus without the cross.

Today’s reading begins with Jesus asking his disciples two questions. The first question was: “who do the people say I am?” Jesus had become well-known by this time because of his ministry, and people were forming all kinds of opinions about his identity. In answer to the question, the disciples shared some of the common views.

Jesus then asked his second question: “But who do you say I am?” Peter answered: “you are the Christ.”

Jesus responded by instructing the disciples not to share this information with others. They were to keep his identity as the Christ quiet – at least for the time being.

We learn from Matthew’s Gospel, however, that there were also words of praise given to Peter that day, as well as further messages for his disciples. These words made clear that Peter’s answer was correct – Jesus was indeed the Christ, the promised one of God, the Messiah for whom Israel had long been waiting. Jesus affirmed this and added promises of God’s blessing and protection to his present and future followers.

Like the other Gospel accounts, Mark then goes on to record some very important new information that Jesus shared. Jesus explains that although he is the Christ, he is going to be rejected by his own people. As a result, he will suffer, and die, and then rise again in three days.

Jesus here tells his disciples very plainly what is going to happen. But Peter doesn't want to hear it. He takes Jesus aside and rebukes him. The specific words of his rebuke are recorded by Matthew. Peter says: "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you."

Upon hearing this rebuke, Jesus rebukes Peter right back. He says: "Get behind me, Satan! For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man."

We might think that this rebuke of Peter is a little harsh. Isn't Peter simply letting his friend know he doesn't want him to suffer and die? What's wrong with that?

But there's more going on here. And this is an important moment for Peter and the disciples in their learning.

Jesus rebukes Peter because Peter had given in to temptation. Two temptations, in fact. He had given in to the temptation of expecting life to unfold without pain and loss. And he had given in to the temptation of expecting our Lord to reign only in power and never in weakness.

Jesus needed to rebuke Peter. These were temptations that would hinder Peter and the others should they continue to succumb to them.

They are also temptations that can hinder us. Let us therefore examine each of them and think about the forms of them that we encounter. And let us pray for God to equip us so that we may overcome them.

Maybe it's all the medical advances we've made over the course of the years, or maybe it's all the glamorous scenes of life we get in the media and in our entertainment. Whichever the case, we are certainly more prone these days, more than ever before, to expect life to unfold without pain and loss. We feel we should have a long, joy-filled life because we see so many people have them. Or at least appear to have them.

But life is fragile. And all of us suffer at some point. Peter needed to let Jesus go to his suffering and death.

We know it was hard for Peter. Jesus was young and primed to do great things, especially as the promised Messiah. Peter would have felt bad for Jesus.

What's more, Peter would have also felt bad for himself. And his people. Losing Jesus would mean losing his great teacher. And his friend. And his nation's redeemer.

When God decides to let pain and death come to us, we are tempted to rebuke him like Peter did. We're tempted to protest his ways in anger—pointing out what seems unfair, arguing that our way is better.

God understands our hurt. And he offers his love and care to help us, especially through his Holy Word where we will find songs of lament and even complaint to help us through our pain. But ultimately, God expects us to submit to his plans. His ways are not our ways. His ways are better. They are holy and just.

We must remember, too, that the pain and suffering we experience in this world come about because of human sin, including our own. Some of it comes because of the curse of death resulting from Adam and Eve's original sin. Some of it comes from the individual sins we and others commit each day.

Thankfully, God has also dealt with our pain and suffering. It will not continue forever. God sent Jesus to pay sin's price – which he did through his death on the cross. Because of this, we who believe will be

resurrected from our death and live forever in the new creation when Christ comes again. There our pain and suffering will be ended. What a glorious day that will be!

Until that day, we will face temptations. Like Peter did. And not only the temptation to expect life to go as we would like, but also a second temptation – the temptation of expecting our Lord to reign only in power and never in weakness.

Peter and the other disciples lived in a day when most people expected God's promised Messiah to bring about an earthly kingdom. They expected the Messiah to lead the people in overthrowing their nation's subjectors and cause it to rise in prominence once again.

And even those who didn't place their hope in an earthly kingdom still expected the Messiah to show his power by turning all men's hearts toward God.

Peter and the disciples certainly saw Jesus do powerful things. He drew great crowds with his teaching. He performed great miracles of healing. He fed large crowds, cast out demons and often defied the laws of nature as he was going about his ministry.

But Jesus did not come to establish an earthly kingdom. "My kingdom is not of this world," he would later explain. And he certainly didn't lead his people in a rebellion. Or even encourage one.

Jesus did come to establish a kingdom. But his was a different kind of kingdom. This kingdom would be marked by servanthood. As such, in this kingdom there would be the appearance of weakness. And there would be suffering.

Jesus showed this when he went willingly to the cross – which he did to serve his people by paying for their sins. "Jesus was crucified in weakness," explained Paul to the Corinthians. But he also "lives by the power of God" (2 Cor. 13:4).

What about us?

When we follow Jesus, we also live by the power of God. His power comes as God gives to us his strength, his wisdom, his blessing. His power is shown through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is felt in the peace and contentment we find.

But God's power is often hidden among us too, just as it was with Jesus.

These are the times when no one seems to care about the Gospel. These are the times when we hear God's teachings being mocked. These are the times when our church seems empty. These are the times when its leaders seem ineffective.

These are the times, too, when believers suffer persecution for their faith – carrying the crosses that Jesus said they must take up.

In these times of weakness, God is still exerting his power. And he will sustain his people. As God once explained to Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Knowing this, we can say with Paul in response: "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Doing so will help keep us from giving in to the temptation of expecting our Lord to reign only in power and never in weakness. It will remind us that God's reign includes both. At least in this world.

We should be confident that God can and will work through weakness. He worked powerfully through the weakness of the cross. So also, he can and will work powerfully through our weaknesses too.

On a day when Peter probably felt very strong – having answered his Lord correctly and received his Lord's praise – Peter soon was knocked down with a strong rebuke. But Peter, as we know, picked himself up and kept following Jesus. In the days ahead he would experience other such stumbles. But

he would also experience great triumphs. Most importantly, Peter endured in faith to the end, and has received the crown of life.

May God also lead us to endure in faith – through our times of weakness and our times of strength. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

*HYMN OF THE DAY #683 Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me*

- 1 Jesus, Thy boundless love to me  
No thought can reach, no tongue declare;  
Unite my thankful heart to Thee,  
And reign without a rival there!  
Thine wholly, Thine alone I am;  
Be Thou alone my constant flame.**
  
- 2 O grant that nothing in my soul  
May dwell, but Thy pure love alone;  
Oh, may Thy love possess me whole,  
My joy, my treasure, and my crown!  
All coldness from my heart remove;  
My ev'ry act, word, thought be love.**
  
- 3 This love unwearied I pursue  
And dauntlessly to Thee aspire.  
Oh, may Thy love my hope renew,  
Burn in my soul like heav'nly fire!  
And day and night, be all my care  
To guard this sacred treasure there.**
  
- 4 In suff'ring be Thy love my peace,  
In weakness be Thy love my pow'r;  
And when the storms of life shall cease,  
O Jesus, in that final hour,  
Be Thou my rod and staff and guide,  
And draw me safely to Thy side!**

*APOSTLES' CREED*

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.**

*OFFERING Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me* Setting: Mark Sedio

## *PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH*

Let us pray for God's Holy Church and for all who are in need:

O Lord, in these Lenten days set our minds on the things of the kingdom rather than the things of the world, that we may deny ourselves, take up our crosses and follow Your Son. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, You have given Your Church the joy of proclaiming, that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Grant all pastors and church workers the gifts of Your Spirit to preach and teach this boldly, and help us to confess it in word and deed. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, preserve us from being ashamed of You when we face ridicule and persecution in this world. Thank You that Our Savior perfectly loves us and will be with us until He comes in glory with the angels. Be near to those who face martyrdom and sustain them. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, all sovereignty belongs to You and You rule over the nations. We pray that You would bless Joseph and Ralph and all those who govern us, that they may serve wisely and in accord with Your will. Bless all who protect us, especially the members of our Armed Forces who are in harm's way. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Blessed Lord, behold in mercy those who suffer, who are undergoing treatment, and those who are near death, especially \_\_\_\_\_. Grant them healing in accord with Your perfect will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We come, O Savior, to Your table, for we are weak and weary. Feed us with the Bread of Heaven and set our feet upon the path to do Your will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we remember with thanksgiving the multitude of nations that rejoice in heaven before You with Abraham and Sarah. Sustain us in the same faith, that as their offspring we may finally share in Your glorious banquet feast.

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God 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.**

*BENEDICTION*

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make His face shine on us  
and be gracious to us.

The Lord look upon us with favor and ✠ give us peace.

*SENDING HYMN #429 We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died*

- 1 We sing the praise of Him who died,  
Of Him who died upon the cross.  
The sinner's hope let all deride;  
For this we count the world but loss.**
- 2 Inscribed upon the cross we see  
In shining letters, "God is love."  
He bears our sins upon the tree;  
He brings us mercy from above.**
- 3 The cross! It takes our guilt away;  
It holds the fainting spirit up;  
It cheers with hope the gloomy day  
And sweetens ev'ry bitter cup.**
- 4 It makes the coward spirit brave  
And nerves the feeble arm for fight;  
It takes the terror from the grave  
And gilds the bed of death with light;**
- 5 The balm of life, the cure of woe,  
The measure and the pledge of love,  
The sinner's refuge here below,  
The angels' theme in heav'n above.**
- 6 To Christ, who won for sinners grace  
By bitter grief and anguish sore,  
Be praise from all the ransomed race  
Forever and forevermore.**

*ANNOUNCEMENTS*

*DISMISSAL*

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*POSTLUDE We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died*      Setting: Tim Shewmaker

**Acknowledgments**

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