



Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Aurora, MN

First Sunday in Lent

February 21, 2021

Pastor Greg Anderson

PRELUDE

HEARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

LBW pg. 77

HYMN

“O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days”

LBW # 99

O Lord throughout these forty days You prayed and kept the fast; inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past.

You strove with Satan, and you won; your faithfulness endured; Lend us your nerve, your skill and trust In God’s eternal Word.

GREETING

LBW pg. 78

KYRIE

LBW pg. 78

HYMN OF PRAISE

“This is the Feast...”

LBW pg. 81

C: Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

Power and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia. Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation. Blessing and honor and glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God. For the Lamb Who was slain has begun His reign:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, heavenly Father, in the waters of the flood you saved the chosen, and in the wilderness of temptation you protected your son from sin. Renew us in the gift of baptism. May your holy angels be with us, that the wicked foe may have no power over us, through Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the holy spirit, one god, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 9:8-17

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹‘As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark.’ ¹¹I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.’ ¹²God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ ¹⁷God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’

R: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 25:1-10(read responsively)

¹ To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

² **O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me.**

³ Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

⁴ **Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.

⁶ **Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

⁷ Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O LORD!

⁸ **Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

¹⁰ **All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.**

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:18-22

¹⁸For Christ also suffered^{*} for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you^{*} to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for^{*} a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

R: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

LBW pg. 83

C: Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

GOSPEL INTRODUCTION

LBW pg. 83

C: Glory to you O lord.

GOSPEL

Mark 1:9-15

The Baptism of Jesus

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

The Temptation of Jesus

12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

GOSPEL RESPONSE

LBW pg. 83

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Sermon 1st Sunday in Lent 2021 Mark 1.9-15

The journey of Lent takes us first from the mountain top of the transfiguration to the valley of Lent. It is in the valley where people live. It is in the valley where 98% of the struggles and joys of life take place. This is about the journey toward the cross on Good Friday and then the joy of resurrection on Easter Sunday. May you find this a wondrous time to reflect on your life and the perfect love of God which gives us life and salvation for free! I have included in this week's message a sermon outline and another excellent commentary from Osvaldo Vena from the Luther Seminary *Working Preacher* web page.

God Bless,

Pastor Greg Anderson

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"From the Mountain to the Wilderness, the danger of life and faith"

I. Climbing Mt. Everest...final ascent

-We start with the sun and end with a storm, most people die on the way down

-Transfiguration is the mountain top. Lent is in the valley and wilderness

-Jesus is driven by the Spirit into the wilderness... after his baptism

II. After I get Baptized, shouldn't good things happen?

-God only does good things? God has a plan...Gods in charge...8th Grade girls question... why danger in the valley?

-Why would God, the Spirit, drive Jesus into the wilderness?

The Spirit forcefully compels Jesus there, indicated with the verb (*ekballo*, "drove out")

-Dose God drive us to issues we need to confront?

III. What was this wilderness like? What could it represent?

-The temptation of Satan fighting evil...the accuser

-Maybe Jesus had issues to confront: fear, doubt, lack of faith? (Mark about spiritual forces)

-Jesus was fully human, fully divine, but he totally depended on God

-Can we learn from Jesus when we walk in the wilderness?

IV. And what about the wild beasts and Angels? Vision Quest

-Why did they not attack? *Going on a wolf hunt!* Danger Creation restored?

-Why were the angels there? How did they wait on him? Do they do this for us?

-Does God always send comfort? Yes, I believe so...but God also sends growth

V. Our trust is in Our Risen Savior and in his cross (Surrender) Journey of Lent

- We trust that Jesus is with us on all our journeys Gods Transformation!!!!

-What am I to do? Trust in your relationship, seek him through prayer

-The light of his and our baptism covers us in love

-Yes, we will travel from the mountains to the valleys, but he is with us! Amen!

Oswaldo Vena

Professor Emeritus of New Testament Interpretation / Profesor de Nuevo Testamento

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Evanston, Ill., USA

Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:9-11)

It is problematic to compare Jesus' baptism with that of the people coming to be baptized by John. This action betrays a relationship of superior to inferior, of teacher to disciple, which places Jesus in a subordinate relationship with John.

The other problem is the nature of the baptism as repentance for the forgiveness of sins. What did Jesus have to repent of? What sins did he have to confess? It has been suggested that the people coming to be baptized were simply expressing their readiness for the promised kingdom of God. Their repentance and confession pertain to social sins, not innate, personal ones, for which they had a recourse through the Temple rites. It was an admission that they had somehow participated in a system of oppression and that now they were ready to change in preparation for God's reign.

The baptism, then, was a visible sign of that attitude. If that was the case, then it was natural for Jesus to identify with this popular movement and do the same.¹ Granted that this makes some people uncomfortable, it is the only honest reading that the text affords.

Herman Waetjen has suggested that Jesus was baptized *into* the Jordan (*eis*), rather than *in* the Jordan (*en*), as happened to the people in verse 5.² The Jews from Judea and Jerusalem were not submerged in the river; that is, they did not submit to the full depth of John's baptism. But Jesus did. He completely renounced the old order³ and proved to be a more genuine disciple than the others.

The tearing of the heavens (*sjizomenous*) parallels the tearing of the veil in Mark 15. The Gospel writer is using it to show that the Spirit is available again. The heavens have been ripped open. In 15:38 it is the veil that separated the people from God's presence which is torn apart (*esjizthe*). Now the way to God is open for everyone. The purpose of these two verses was to call attention to what was included between them: Jesus' ministry. The first, 1:10, signals the beginning; the second, 15:38, its end.

In the baptism, the Spirit comes from above and goes *into* (*eis*) Jesus, filling him. That is why the Baptist says that the one coming after him "will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (1:8). He is not a prophet temporarily anointed with the Spirit but rather one in which the Spirit lives permanently. That makes a huge difference between a traditional prophet and Jesus, something corroborated by the voice from heaven in verse 11.

In Mark's narrative, the voice from heaven fulfills the purpose of identifying Jesus' origin: he might come from Nazareth, a place of low honor, but he is God's son. Jesus' honor is *ascribed*; that is, granted by someone in a

powerful and honorable position, in this case the God of Israel. The divine voice makes an astonishing affirmation: “You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased.” It is a composite citation from Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1, among other passages, and it comes for Jesus’ and the readers’ benefit, not for those witnessing the event (compare it with Matthew 3:17).

The expression “my Son, the Beloved” does not have a capital initial, as in most modern translations, since the original Greek was all written in capital letters. It denotes the translator’s bias, who believes Jesus to be the Son of God in an ontological sense. But the idea here is more relational. Jesus is the favorite son of God, the one God has chosen to accomplish the task that the evangelist is about to tell the reader. It shows God’s partiality and preference. It also shows some rivalry with his teacher John. It basically says that God has chosen the disciple over the teacher!

The Jewish people believed that prophecy had ceased with the last prophets but that it would be restored at the end-times (Malachi 4:5-6). The heavens had “closed,” as it were, and there was no direct communication from God to humankind anymore. That Mark says that the heavens were torn apart is a daring affirmation. That the Spirit descended and entered into Jesus is even more so. Here we have an absolutely revolutionary claim: the God of Israel is speaking again and has chosen to do it through a humble peasant from Galilee!

Jesus’ testing in the wilderness (Mark 1:12-13)

Like Israel—God’s son in the past—Jesus is tested in the wilderness. The number 40 could be symbolic of the 40 years Israel spent in the Sinai desert or just indicate a long period of time. Given the citation from the Hebrew Bible in Mark 1:2-3, the first possibility is more plausible. His testing may have served as a preparation and empowerment for ministry. That Jesus was assisted by angels resembles a similar situation in the life of Elijah (see 1 Kings 19:5-8). The tradition behind Luke’s Gospel says that angels attended to him while praying at the Mount of Olives (see also Luke 22:43), where Jesus was tested in preparation for the final stage of his ministry.

Mark does not tell us the outcome of the testing, but it is clear that he understands it as the decisive encounter with Satan that will explain Jesus’ exorcisms in the rest of the Gospel: “the stronger one has confronted the prince of demons, and is plundering his house” (Mark 3:22-27).⁴

Contextualizing the text

God invites people to see the world from the margins of society. Every liberating movement has started like that, including the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and the more recent ones such as Black Lives Matter and #MeToo.

We should accept our responsibility in social sins such as racism, homophobia, classism, etc., from which we need to repent.

The relationship between prayer and praxis needs to be clarified. Prayer can never replace praxis nor can praxis replace prayer. They are two sides of the same coin. Jesus is the best example.

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HYMN

"Thy Holy Wings"

WOV # 741

1 Thy holy wings, O Savior, spread gently over me, and let me rest securely through good and ill in thee.
Oh, be my strength and portion, my rock and hiding place, and let my ev'ry moment be lived within thy grace.

2 Oh, let me nestle near thee, within thy downy breast where I will find sweet comfort and peace within thy nest. Oh, close thy wings around me and keep me safely there, for I am but a newborn and need thy tender care.

APOSTLES' CREED

We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: Hear us, O God. **C: *Your mercy is great.***

THE PEACE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

OFFERING PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LBW pg. 91

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

LBW pg. 95

SENDING HYMN

“A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”

LBW # 228

A mighty Fortress is our God A trusty Shield and Weapon He helps us free from every need That hath us now overtaken
The old evil Foe Now means deadly woe Deep guile and great might are his dread arms in fight On Earth is not his equal

With might of ours can naught be done Soon were our loss effected But for us fights the Valiant One Whom God Himself
elected Ask ye who is this? Jesus Christ it is Of Sabbath Lord and there's none other God He holds the field forever

DISMISSAL

LBW pg. 95

Prayer Concerns

Lorna Kallio, Charlotte and Ken Carlson, Marie Anderson, Louise Ellingson, Glorene Clark, Herb Moore, Bill Utley, Bob Kallio, Marilyn Koschak, Susan (Paula Skelton's sister), Tom Lehtinen, Ruby Okstad (218-749-2866)

The Executive Council is requesting that members let them know if they have started or completed the covid vaccine. This information will be very helpful in making the decision to return to worship. Please Call Debbie Maki at 218-290-1471 or call the church at 218-229-3214 and leave a message. Thank you.

****The annual statements of giving are in your mailboxes at the church. ****