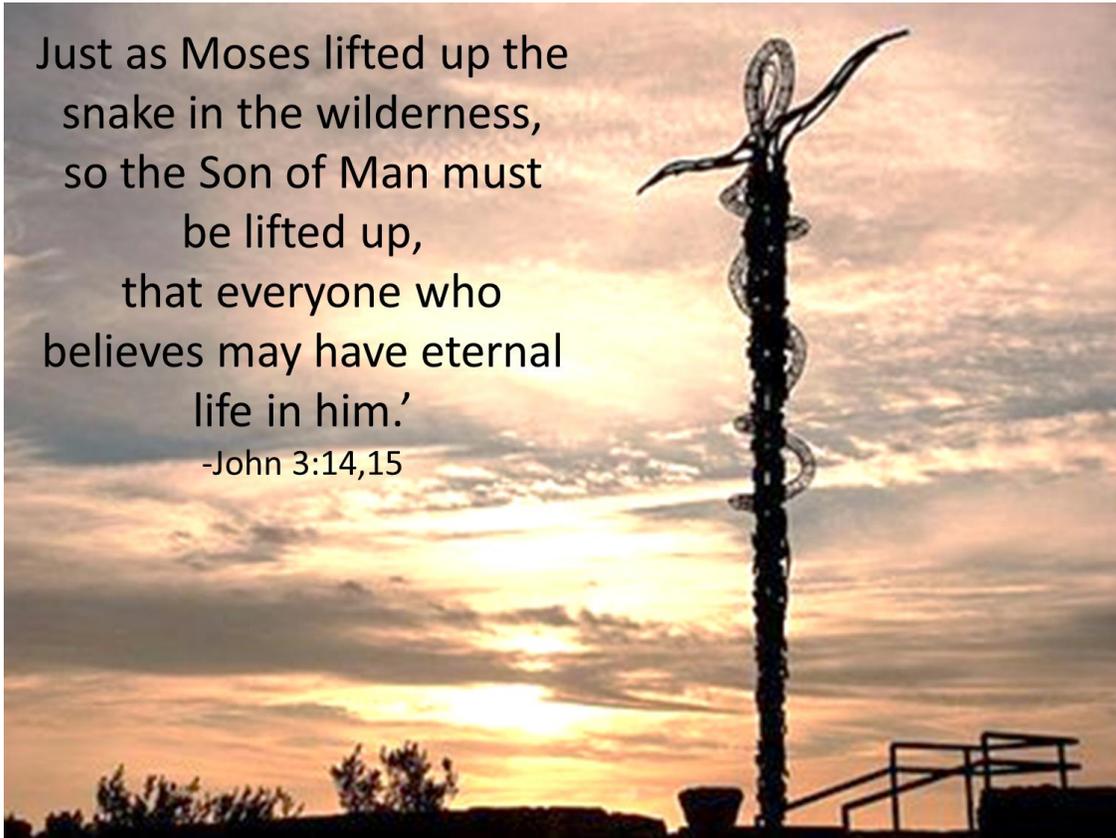


Just as Moses lifted up the
snake in the wilderness,
so the Son of Man must
be lifted up,
that everyone who
believes may have eternal
life in him.'
-John 3:14,15



Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Aurora, MN

Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 14, 2021

Pastor Greg Anderson

PRELUDE

HEARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

LBW pg. 77

HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

LBW # 448

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

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

O God, rich in mercy, by the humiliation of your son you lifted up this fallen world and rescued us from the hopelessness of death. Lead us in to your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with us and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.” ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, “Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.” ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

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

PSALM 107:1-3, 17-22 (read responsively)

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²**Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble**

³and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

¹⁷**Some were sick through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities endured affliction;**

¹⁸they loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

¹⁹**Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress;**

²⁰he sent out his word and healed them, and delivered them from destruction.

²¹**Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.**

²²And let them offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and tell of his deeds with songs of joy.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 2:1-10

²You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.

³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else.

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

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

John 3:14-21

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

GOSPEL RESPONSE

LBW pg. 83

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Sermon 4th Sunday of Lent 2021

"Man vs. Wild"

I. "Man vs. Wild" television show

- Was one of my favorite shows
- He parachutes in with only rain gear and a survival knife
- The environment was his friend, everything from mice to bugs, to shelter
- ultimately man vs. wild is a test of faith, in himself, training, and creation

II. In our text today we have the new show *Jews vs. Wild*

- We drop you into the wilderness for 40 years, where all your neighbors will try to kill you
- You will suffer from lack of food and shelter
- But you need to depend on God for everything

III. This is where the Israelites failed in faith:

They "spoke against God and against Moses"

- Consequences, God sent poisonous snakes, and many died
- Could it be the same for us when we do not follow our calling?
- When we live a life of complaining against everyone and especially God?
- As a modern day Lutheran, God does not cause suffering, but he did in OT
- But when we ignore Gods call, follow a path of hatred, violence, addiction:
I could see where a person would think God causes suffering

IV. The irony of this text is that God provides the way of salvation, the lifting of the serpent

- Especially when the people came to their senses and cried out
- Do you ever think that sometimes people would rather die than change?
- I wonder if some even refused to look up

V. Our text from John: *God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him may not parish but may have eternal life.*

- the answer for both the story of Moses and Christ is faith
- faith is the only way to survive in life
- Ultimately we are all stars on the show man vs. wild, for we all struggle vs the final enemy death
- But when we live in faith we look up to the cross, we look up to the son of man who saves us through the cross and brings us home

Alicia D. Myers

Associate Professor of New Testament and Greek
Campbell University Divinity School
Buies Creek, N.C.

Jesus remains in Jerusalem in John 3:1-21, not leaving until verse 22 when he returns to the Judean wilderness, perhaps baptizing (see verses 22 and 26; contradicted by John 4:2).

John 3:1-21 records a nighttime conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, one of the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem, a Pharisee by association. Although the passage for this week does not begin until this conversation has moved from dialogue (verses 1-9) to monologue (verses 10-21), understanding the larger context of 3:14-21 is crucial for interpretation. As part of the larger story of Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem for a Passover festival, John 2:13-3:21 foreshadows Jesus' later controversies in the Gospel which lead to his final Passover in Jerusalem (John 12-20). In 2:13-3:21 Jesus challenges others to see in him God's unexpected means of deliverance.

Jesus and Nicodemus have a far-ranging conversation in John 3, but the most important part for us begins in verse 10. At this point, Jesus takes over speaking and first ridicules Nicodemus' confusion (or purposeful antagonism) with a derisive comment concerning his being "the teacher of Israel" (verse 10). What follows in verses 11-21 is an expansion on Jesus's comments in verses 1-9, where he contrasted heavenly and earthly births. In verse 11, Jesus continues with the binary, explaining that Nicodemus' incomprehension comes from his rejection of "our" testimony and the inaccessibility of heaven for anyone other than "the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man" (verse 13). If you feel a bit like Nicodemus at this point, wondering what exactly Jesus is talking about, you are not alone! The "we" of verse 11 is a matter of much debate among scholars, but most think it includes Jesus and other witnesses who agree with him in the Gospel of John including John (the Baptist), Scripture (and its various figures and authors), and the Father. Jesus lays out all these witnesses in 5:31-47 during his next visit to Jerusalem.

The ascending and descending Son of Man in verse 13 leads straight into our passage beginning with verse 14. The close connection is more visible when we read without the break found in most English translations. In fact, when kept together, we can see the parallelism in Jesus' statements through verse 16:

And no one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended out of heaven,

the Son of Man,

and just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,

thusly it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up

so that everyone believing in him might have eternal life,

for thusly God loved the cosmos that he gave his Unique Son,

so that everyone believing in him might not perish but have eternal life.

Read as a whole, these verses clearly align the Son of Man with God's Unique Son from John 1:17-18 and 1:51. Sent from God to the cosmos, Jesus' mission is to give life and light to the cosmos just as at the moment of creation when God uttered life through the Word (John 1:1-5; see also Genesis 1:1). In order to receive this gift, however, humanity must acknowledge its need by looking to Jesus.

This larger context also helps us understand the allusion to Numbers 21 in John 3:14. In Numbers 21, the Israelites grumble against God's wilderness provisions. To reveal their mistake, the Lord sends poisonous serpents, who bite and kill many Israelites. When they cry out to Moses for intercession, God's prescription is a mounted serpent set up in the camp. To experience healing, the Israelites must look to the serpent raised above them: that is, they must see the image of their sin and acknowledge their wrongdoing in order to accept God's gift of life.

Like this serpent, Jesus' mission to the world is one of revelation but, as in Numbers, his arrival is a mixture of rescue and punishment. As Jesus continues in John 3:19-21, he uses another image familiar in the Old Testament and the Gospel: light and darkness. Jesus is the "true Light" who came into the world (John 1:9-10); he is Light and Life, but his brightness can be blinding (see John 8:12; 9:39-41). Jesus displays this light first in conversations and later in confrontations with individuals and crowds in the Gospel. While some look upon him and receive his light, most turn away. As he explains in verse 19, "people loved darkness more than the light." Jesus is never surprised by people in John's Gospel, but he continually surprises, challenges, and confuses those who see him. They are dumbstruck by the presence of astounding Light in a regular human body (see John 2:20; 8:48-58).

Jesus' arrival, therefore, can lead one out of darkness and into light and life, or it can confirm one's place among the dead. God's motivation for sending Jesus is not condemnation, but love. God sends Jesus into the camp, and that trip culminates with Jesus' own exaltation upon a stake: a Roman cross. Lifted high, Jesus' pierced body demands attention as the narrator's gaze lingers on this scene in John 19:34-37. Just like the serpent in the wilderness, Jesus' body, the very location of God's glory (John 2:21-22), is the most staggering revelation of the gospel. Rather than actively judging, Jesus' form hangs, to be looked upon by those who dare face the horror of "the sin of the world" that caused the Lamb to die (John 1:29). Yet, rather than despair, this sight is also the place of life, the sign of God's profound love for creation. Thus, verse 21 ends with hope: "But the one who does the truth comes to the light so that their works might be shined upon, because they are being done by God." Jesus, the Light of the World, exposes truth all around him. That truth is not all beautiful; most of it is human mistakes, wickedness, and hatred prompted by selfishness and fear (verses 19-20).

But exposing these failures also means shining a light on God's unending love and work on our behalf. When we turn our eyes to the Light and accept our failings alongside God's love, we also see the cross where life is freely given.

HYMN

"God Loved the World"

LBW # 292

1 God loved the world so that he gave his only Son the lost to save, that all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.

2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith, who was made flesh and suffered death; all then who trust in him alone are built on this chief cornerstone.

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

"Christ, the Life of All the Living"

LBW # 97

1 Christ, the life of all the living; Christ, the death of death our foe; Christ, for us yourself once giving to the darkest depths of woe: through your suffering, death, and merit, life eternal we inherit;

Refrain: thousand, thousand thanks are due, dearest Jesus, unto you.

2 You have suffered great affliction and have borne it patiently, even death by crucifixion: our atonement full and free. For you chose to be tormented, that our doom should be prevented;

Refrain: thousand, thousand thanks are due, dearest Jesus, unto you.

DISMISSAL

LBW pg. 95

Prayer Concerns

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

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. ****

Members of Our Savior's Lutheran,

Plea for Help for Barb Swanson

On Sunday, Feb. 28th, 2021 the apartment building where our church member and dear friend Barb Swanson lived burned! Barb was able to get out of the burning building with only the clothes on her back. Barb is safe and is temporarily staying with her son in Virginia and looking to find a new apartment.

Barb has lost everything in the fire and did not have renters insurance.

A group of women from our church with Barbs input have put together a list of needs and are asking for donations to help rebuild her life. The items can be either new or used in clean and good condition; **possibly you know people who may have some of the needed items who would like to help Barb.**

Please call Jan Moore or Deb Maki to choose items on the list that will help rebuild Barbs life; Barb does not want more than she needs and we don't want duplicate items when so many things are needed.

Please bring your gifts to the church, a gift table will be set up in the fellowship hall ready for you to drop off your gifts; please include a gift card so Barb will be able to thank you. If you have larger furniture items do not deliver them to the church call Deb Maki as arrangements will have to be made once Barb finds an apartment.

Money donations can also be given for Barb we prefer you include them with your church offering and label it as a designated gift for Barb Swanson, the church treasurer will forward your gifts on to Barb weekly, the designated gifts will show up on your quarterly giving statement.

Thank You Everyone

For responding to this plea to rebuild Barb's life,

Thank you for doing God's Work

with your hearts, hands and abilities!

May God Bless you!

KITCHEN

Set of 4 light-weight melmaline dishes

4 glasses, 4 coffee mugs

Silverware

Kitchen Utensils: spatulas, serving spoons, vegetable peeler, can opener, measuring cups

Set of pots and pans with covers

Fry pans (small, medium, large with covers)

Small Blue Enamel Roaster (the blue speckled one)

Set of kitchen knives

2 cookie sheets 1 cake pan

Juice pitcher

Colander/strainer

Cutting Board

Set of light weight mixing bowls

Set of storage bowls

Hand electric mixer

Toaster, 2-slice

Coffee Pot 2 cup

Microwave

Crockpot

Cutting board

Sink strainer

Tall Kitchen, Garbage Can and garbage bags

Pot Holders (4)

4 dish towels, 4 dish cloths

KITCHEN

Small table

2 kitchen wood captains arm chairs (specific for Bar's health and comfort)

SUPPLIES

Scissors

Baggies, tinfoil, plastic wrap, paper towels, toilet paper

Laundry basket, Laundry soap, hand soap, dish soap

BATHROOM

Bathroom rug, waste basket

Hairbrush and comb

Hand mirror, tooth brush, tooth paste, bar soap

4 Towels, 4 hand towels, 4 wash cloths

Toilet brush

BED ROOM

Twin Bed and mattress

Bed Table

Bed Lamp

Alarm clock

Twin Blanket

Twin sheets and pillow case

Twin mattress pad

LIVING ROOM

Sofa

Chair or recliner chair

Lamp

End table/coffee table

Vacuum cleaner

MARH IS FOOD SHELF MONTH

Please consider helping your neighbors in need. There is a box located in the narthex for donations. 😊

