



John 2, 13-22

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Aurora, MN

Third Sunday in Lent

March 7, 2021

Pastor Greg Anderson

PRELUDE

HEARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

LBW pg. 77

HYMN

“There in God’s Garden”

WOV # 668

There in God's garden stands the Tree of wisdom, whose leaves hold forth the healing of the nations. Tree of all knowledge, Tree of all compassion, Tree of all beauty.

Its name is Jesus, name that says, 'Our Savior! There on its branches see the scars of suffering; see where the tendrils of our human selfhood feed on its life-blood.

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, through your son you have called us to live faithfully and act courageously. Keep us steadfast in your covenant of grace, and teach of the wisdom that comes only 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

Exodus 20:1-17

20Then God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. ⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor and do all your work. ¹⁰But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

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

PSALM 19 (read responsively)

¹The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

²**Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**

³There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard;

⁴**yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,**

⁵which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶**Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.**

⁷The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple;

⁸**the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes;**

⁹the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.**

¹¹Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹²**But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.**

¹³Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

¹⁸For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." ²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, ²³but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling

block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

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 2:13-22

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. ¹⁵Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." ¹⁸The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking of the temple of his body. ²²After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

LBW pg. 83

C: *Praise to you, O Christ.*

SERMON

Sermon 3rd Sunday of Lent

On this 3rd Sunday of Lent we have the early cleansing of the temple in John. At this point in the story blood could have been shed and the Jesus movement could have been violently destroyed. Was Jesus tempted to bring about violent revolution? This is a powerful question about the nature of Jesus and His human and divine personalities. I find comfort in the idea that Jesus struggled in His humanness. It makes Him seem closer to me and my struggles. I have included in this message a sermon outline and a commentary from Alicia D. Meyers from the *Working Preacher* web site from Luther Seminary. Enjoy.

Peace,
Pastor Greg

"The Whip of the Word"

I. What is going on? Who is this Jesus?

- John has Jesus early in his book attacking temple, after turning water into wine
- These are symbols of cleansing
- But this action of Jesus seems crazy, and leaves us many questions

II. Luther's Question: Why did Jesus use violence for this attack on the money changers?

- Dose this mean that we too should use violence in our proclamation of the Gospel?
- Or is there something else going on in the text?

**III. What sin is Jesus attacking? Idolatry, first commandment,
the temple had become a market! Court of Gentiles overrun!**

- Luther: Jesus stands as the bridge between the OT and NT,
The Law of Moses vs. Gospel
- Jesus would have had the right to stone to death everyone! Faith and gov. were one
- Was Jesus tempted to use the sword?
- Movie: *Last Temptation of Christ*: Was Christ on the brink? disciples and crowds were ready to attack temple guards!
- Would he bring about the kingdom through violence? Blood would be shed!

IV. No: The kingdom would be brought about by the sword and whip of the tongue.

- Luther: Christ rules over Moses, The law of love rules over all
- For Christ is Christ, he is lord over all! He brings about a kingdom of love!
- Luther: The kingdom of Moses and of Jesus must remain separate, two roles

V. Maybe this seems like foolishness; and it is foolishness to those who are perishing

- It is foolishness to those who wish to accomplish all things with violence
- It is foolishness for those who rely on their own strength and the strength of the sword
- As for us we rely on the Cross; and the strength of God's love
- Life and salvation for free! Amen

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At first, John 2:13-22 seems like an odd passage for the Third Sunday in Lent.

The temple clearing comes much later in the Synoptics, immediately preceding Jesus's Passion. It is a fitting passage, however, because it describes the temple during a time of preparation. Just as the season of Lent helps Christians prepare for Easter, Jews travelled to Jerusalem early in order to purify themselves for Passover (John 11:55). Christians likewise practice meditation, prayer, and participate in worship throughout Lent. Connecting with the Jews in this way helps us avoid anti-Jewish readings and enables us to reflect on the audacity of Jesus' actions and claims.

John 2:13-22 follows Jesus' first sign in Cana, where he turned water into celebratory wine at his mother's request. Jesus travels to Jerusalem because of Passover and, like other pilgrims, he comes to the temple. John 2:13-15 provides rich detail of the scene. Merchants bustle among their animals, moneychangers busily exchange coins, and pilgrims peruse the stalls, bartering with the trades people and seeking priests to

complete sacrificial rituals. Moneychangers exchanged *denarii* into half-shekels so pilgrims could pay the temple-tax, while animals were offered in sacrifices for ritual purity from daily life so they could participate fully in the Passover. Although certainly different, the scene in John 2 is not entirely unlike Christian preparations for Easter. Believers gathered in a holy place, remembering God's deliverance and seeking to honor God through rituals and repentance.

Yet, rather than praising those gathered, Jesus goes into a rage. Creating his own whip, Jesus chases out the animals, sending the merchants after them. He "pours out the coins" and turns over tables, causing the once "seated" moneychangers to scatter. He commands the dove-sellers: "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house an emporium!" (verse 16). Jesus effectively turns the temple court into a tumult of frightened animals and shouting merchants, while pilgrims and priests stand aghast. Why on earth would Jesus *stop* purification—and why in such a dramatic way?

The answers to these questions are hinted at in verse 16 and developed in the second half of our passage, verses 17-22. In verse 16, Jesus calls the temple an "emporium," or a marketplace. Rather than a scene of spiritual preparation, Jesus instead sees a place focused on monetary exchange. Like Old Testament prophets, he challenges the temple economy, questioning whether it was focused more on wealth than prayer. Indeed, the first of the two remembrance asides in verse 17 resonates with this critique. Rather than a maniac come to disrupt worship, Jesus' disciples understand him to be like the righteous sufferer of Psalm 69: one whose "zeal" for God's house and statutes made him a target for his enemies (69:9-12). These enemies greatly outnumber him, but he is steadfast in his reliance on God's deliverance (69:13-15). Praising God in song, the psalmist concludes, is more valuable than "an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs" (69:30-31)! Like Jesus, the psalmist has a different understanding of how one is to prepare for a holy day. Rituals and sacrifices should be done out of true devotion to the Lord (see Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8). Jesus will also face explicit opposition in Jerusalem in later chapters, but he remains fixed on God's mission for him, even though it leads him to the cross (see John 10:17-18; 12:28; 19:30). In fact, while on the cross Jesus quotes Psalm 69:21, thereby inviting the Gospel audience to **remember** John 2 (John 19:28). For John, then, Jesus is a righteous sufferer even when—or perhaps **especially when**—what he does looks outrageous.

The second remembrance in 2:21-22 clarifies Jesus' ambiguous answer to the Jews in verse 19: "Destroy this sanctuary (*naon*) and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews' response in verse 20 is more than reasonable: "This sanctuary (*naos*) has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?!" What our narrator informs us in verses 21-22 is, as in verse 17, something these characters could not have concluded in the confusion of the moment. According to John, Jesus' body itself is the sanctuary of God's presence, not the center of the temple which once held the ark of the covenant. John 2:21-22, therefore, ratchets up the characterization from Psalm 69. Jesus is not just any righteous sufferer; **he** is the location of God's glory rather than the temple building in which he stands. Jesus' disruption of the worship practices, therefore, is God's own critique.

Jesus' connection to the temple in John 2 is a thorough-going Christological position that begins in the Prologue. According to John 1:14-18, Jesus is the embodiment of God's Word, whose dwelling with humanity enables them to see God's glory and who continues to show them the way to the Father (Exodus 33-34). Jesus' words in John 1:51 and with the Samaritan woman in 4:21-24 reinforce these ideas. Thus, when Jesus tells Philip that in seeing him, the disciples have seen the Father, we shouldn't be surprised (John 14:9). For John, when people focus too much on a physical location, they miss out on God's glory standing right in front of them. Thus, when the Jerusalem leaders worry about the fate of the temple in 11:45-50, John again re-centers our gaze. The Romans will destroy a physical building in 70 CE, but it was their destruction of Jesus' body, God's true sanctuary, that was both tragic and the means of God's greatest revelation (11:51-52; see also 3:14-18; 19:34-37).

As we walk the path to Jerusalem during Lent, we join crowds of pilgrims from millennia before preparing for festivals remembering God's salvation. But we, too, should be careful lest we miss God's earth-shattering Word in our midst. Rather than coming to a physical temple, or church building, we need instead to come to Jesus (John 12:9, 20). Worshipping in Spirit and truth wherever we may be, we see God's glory by remembering God's love made manifest in Jesus—even when he disrupts our usual plans.

HYMN

"In the Cross of Christ I Glory"

LBW # 104

In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.

When the woes of life o'ertake me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy, never shall the cross forsake me. Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

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

“Lift High the Cross”

LBW # 377

(Refrain) Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

Come, Christians, follow where the Master trod, our King victorious, Christ the Son of God.

(Refrain) Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

Led on their way by this triumphant sign, the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine.

(Refrain) Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name.

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. ****

Quilting will very likely begin when we resume worship. If anyone wishes to start sooner please call or e-mail Linda Oftelie or Janet Salo.

Hunger Facts

MINNESOTA

*Impacted by Covid-19, data from 2020 is still being evaluated. The following information is compiled from the most complete data and projections collected and available at the time of publication.

After years of steadily declining food insecurity rates, it was projected that food insecurity in Minnesota in 2020, impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, could rise to 13%.

9% of Minnesotans had incomes below the poverty line (\$25,926 for a family of four) in 2020. This included 11% of Minnesota's children.

A record over 3.8 Million visits were made to food shelves during 2020.

More than 400,000 Minnesotans receive nutrition benefits via SNAP each month.

71% of those served by SNAP are children, seniors and people with disabilities.

Minnesota's charitable food system (food shelves and food banks, meal programs, etc.) continues to run at capacity. The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated this, making it critical to focus on creating a more just and equitable food system that meets the needs of all Minnesotans.



STRETCH YOUR DONATION

GIVE MORE BY MAKING A CASH DONATION TO YOUR LOCAL FOOD SHELF.

Financial donations go further due to access to food banks and discount purchasing programs, allowing food shelves to purchase items most needed in their community.

YOUR \$10 FOOD DONATION

vs.

YOUR \$10 FINANCIAL DONATION

MN Food Share

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Photo credit: MN Food Share (2018)



You may designate funds to our local Food Shelf with your regular giving. The church will forward your monetary giving to the Food Shelf.



FILL A BAG FOR OUR LOCAL FOOD SHELF

Respond to food insecurity in our community by filling a grocery bag with much needed food and household items for our local food shelf.

Often needed items:

- Proteins - canned meat, fish, and beans, nuts & nut butters
- Fresh/dried herbs & spices
- White, wild, & brown rice varieties
- Gluten-free flours & flour blends (ex. coconut, oat, rice, almond, tapioca, chickpea, sorghum, cassava, amaranth, buckwheat, teff)
- Personal care items - shampoo/soap, deodorant, toothpaste, feminine hygiene, diapers, toilet paper
- Household supplies - laundry & dish detergent, kitchen & bathroom cleaners, paper towels