

Fourth Sunday in Lent - March 19, 2023

LOVE GOD ♦ LIVE THE WORD ♦ SERVE OTHERS ♦ SHARE CHRIST



Themes of light and darkness, sight and blindness pervade the lessons for this Sunday. As humans mired in the sin that holds us captive, we fail to recognize our blindness. Christ calls us into the light of his life, love, and mercy as he beckons us to come and follow him. In that following, we come to see things in ways we have never seen them before, and the light of Christ shines through us.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR GUESTS

PASTOR DAVE HANSEN (912) 826-2711

- ♦ You are here by God's calling and we extend Christ's hospitality to you this day.
- ♦ In worship, we hear God's Word, partake in the Lord's Supper, and return our thanks in prayer and praise.
- ♦ If you receive the Lord's Supper in your home congregation, you are welcome to receive it here.
- ♦ Restrooms and a nursery are located in the backside hallway. Look for the horseshoe cross.
- ♦ Please fill out a visitor card so we can keep in touch. The Lord give you strength for daily living.

LBW - DIVINE SERVICE ONE

▼ = SIT ▲ = STAND

MUSICIAN: KAREN HALL

▼ MUSICAL PRELUDE / PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP

▲ CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION *(Spoken, adptd. from LBW, p.193)*

In the name of the Father, and of the (+)Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Father of mercies and God of all consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may attend to your Word, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, and grow in the fulness of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer. **Amen**

Almighty God, merciful Father:

I, a troubled and penitent sinner, confess to you all my sins and iniquities with which I have offended you and for which I justly deserve your punishment.

But I am sorry for them, and repent of them, and pray for your boundless mercy.

For the sake of the suffering and death of your Son, Jesus Christ, be gracious and merciful to me, a poor sinful being: forgive my sins, give me your Holy Spirit for the amendment of my sinful life, and bring me to life everlasting. Amen

Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for us and for his sake, forgives us all our sins. Through his Holy Spirit he cleanses us and gives us power to proclaim the mighty deeds of God who called us out of darkness into the splendor of his light. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

▲ HYMN "GOD HIMSELF IS PRESENT" LBW #249

▲ KYRIE *(Sung)*

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen**

▲ PRAYER OF THE DAY *(Spoken)*

Let us pray. Holy One, you give sight to the blind and life to those who trust in your Son. **May the light of your Christ pierce through our blindness and open us to your way of life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

▼ FIRST READING - Isaiah 42:14-21 *(Pew Bible, p. 716)*

▼ SECOND READING - Ephesians 5:8-14 *(Pew Bible, p. 1162)*

▼ KCJAM CHOIR / CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

▲ GOSPEL VERSE *(Sung)*

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and abounding in steadfast love.

▲ GOSPEL READING & RESPONSES - John 9:1-7, 13-17, 34-39 *(Sung, Pew Bible, p. 1064)*

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the ninth chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

▼ SERMON

▲ HYMN OF THE DAY - "TODAY YOUR MERCY CALLS US" LBW # 304

▲ APOSTLES' CREED *(Spoken)*

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I 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.

I 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 THE CHURCH *(Spoken)*

▼ CHOIR ANTHEM - "I SURRENDER ALL"

▲ OFFERTORY (*Sung; LBW 502, st. 1*)

**Thee will I love, my strength, my tow'r; Thee will I love, my joy, my crown!
Thee will I love with all my pow'r, In all thy works, and thee, alone;
With true devotion willingly, My life I offer now to thee.**

▲ OFFERING PRAYER (*Spoken*)

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things. **Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

▲ GREAT THANKSGIVING (*Spoken*)

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**
It is indeed right and salutary... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

▲ SANCTUS (*Sung*)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might: Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

▲ WORDS OF INSTITUTION & THE LORD'S PRAYER (*Spoken*)

▲ AGNUS DEI (*Sung*)

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.**

▼ DISTRIBUTION OF THE SACRAMENT

▲ POST-COMMUNION HYMN (*Sung*)

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free Spirit.

▲ POST-COMMUNION DISMISSAL (*Spoken*)

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honor everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the (+)Son, and the Holy Spirit, remain with you always. **Amen**

▲ SENDING HYMN - "AMAZING GRACE" LBW #448

▲ DISMISSAL (*Spoken*)

Fight the good fight of faith. **Taking hold of eternal life to which we've been called.** (1 Tim. 6:12)

Listening for the Promise

Weekly Devotional Fourth Sunday in Lent – March 19, 2023

"Jesus said, 'For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see and those who see may become blind.'" - John 9:39 -

To understand this passage, we must consider its background. Jesus had just healed a man born blind. However, because the Pharisees were threatened by Jesus, they could not acknowledge the goodness of Jesus or the goodness of the miracle that He had just performed. So, when the formerly blind man confessed Jesus as the one who had healed him, the Pharisees kicked him out of the synagogue. In this case, the blind man received his sight, but the Pharisees, who thought that they saw things clearly, were actually blind. Jesus spoke these words against the Pharisees.

This background helps us to understand this passage. Jesus is using physical sight to teach a lesson about spiritual sight. It is the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see Jesus, and apart from the Holy Spirit, we are spiritually blind. So, Jesus is saying two things. First, He came to save those who do not know Him by giving them spiritual sight. Second, He came to harden the hearts and blind the eyes of those who use their "pretended" sight to wickedly oppose His kingdom and lead people astray.

Jesus is not saying that He will give non-Christians sight while blinding faithful Christians as part of some random shakeup. Although He certainly gives sight to non-Christians in converting them, he only blinds the blind leaders who use their "pretended" sight to lead others astray. He confirms them in their blindness in the same way that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Once again, Jesus does not blind faithful Christians. So what happens when Jesus opens our eyes? First, since sin is spiritual blindness, we can't open our own eyes. Jesus does this for us. Second, when Jesus opens our eyes, we see our sinfulness and our need for a savior. Third, we see Jesus as the one who can save us from sin. Finally, we repent of our sin and ask God to forgive us and help us amend our lives. But this process of seeing our sin and repenting of it is not a onetime event. It happens continually throughout our Christian lives and in a concentrated way during the season of Lent. During Lent, Jesus opens our eyes to see our sin so that we might turn to Him for forgiveness and renewal. Jesus gives sight to the blind and sharpens the vision of those who see.

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