

# Fourth Sunday in Lent

March 10, 2024

10:15 am

## Prelude

## Welcome

The fourth of the Old Testament promises providing a baptismal lens this Lent is the promise God makes to Moses: those who look on the bronze serpent will live. In today's gospel Jesus says he will be lifted up on the cross like the serpent, so that those who look to him in faith will live. When we receive the sign of the cross in baptism, that cross becomes the sign we can look to in faith for healing, for restored relationship to God, for hope when we are dying.

## Announcements

## Invocation Confession & Absolution

In the name of the Father, and of the  $\oplus$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

During the season of Lent we are called to return to the Lord with all our heart. Let us confess our sin and seek reconciliation with God and neighbor.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

Merciful God, **you sent your Son, Jesus Christ to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We fail in love, neglect justice, and ignore your truth. Have mercy on us and wash away our sin. Create in us clean hearts for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## Greeting Hymn: ELW #335 "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross"

**1. Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain; free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.**

Refrain: **In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever; till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.**

**2. Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me; there the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me. Refrain**

**3. Near the cross! I Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me; help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me. Refrain**

**4. Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever, till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river. Refrain**

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## 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 into your light, that all our deeds may reflect your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## Kyrie (page 203 ELW)

**Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.**

**We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.**

**Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.**

**Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

## Readings and Psalm

### First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

*Though God provides food and water for the Israelites in the wilderness, they whine and grumble. They forget about the salvation they experienced in the exodus. God punishes them for their sin, but when they repent God also provides a means of healing: a bronze serpent lifted up on a pole.*

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The 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." <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The 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. <sup>8</sup>And 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." <sup>9</sup>So 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.

### Psalm: Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good,  
for God's mercy endures forever.

<sup>2</sup>**Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim  
that God redeemed them from the hand of the foe,**

<sup>3</sup>gathering them in from the lands;  
from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

<sup>17</sup>**Some were fools and took rebellious paths;  
through their sins they were afflicted.**

<sup>18</sup>They loathed all manner of food

and drew near to death's door.

<sup>19</sup>**Then in their trouble they cried to the LORD  
and you delivered them from their distress.**

<sup>20</sup>You sent forth your word and healed them  
and rescued them from the grave.

<sup>21</sup>**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your steadfast love  
and your wonderful works for all people.**

<sup>22</sup>Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving  
and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

## **Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10**

*While we were dead in our sinfulness, God acted to make us alive as a gift of grace in Christ Jesus. We are saved not by what we do but by grace through faith. Thus our good works are really a reflection of God's grace at work in our lives.*

<sup>1</sup>You were dead through the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in 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. <sup>3</sup>All 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. <sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup>not the result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

## **Gospel Acclamation**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

The holy gospel according to John, beginning with the third chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **Gospel: John 3:14-21**

*To explain the salvation of God to the religious leader, Nicodemus, Jesus refers to the scripture passage quoted in today's first reading. Just as those who looked upon the bronze serpent were healed, so people will be saved when they behold Christ lifted up on the cross.*

[Jesus said:] <sup>14</sup>Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>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.

<sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Those 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. <sup>19</sup>And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup>For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that

their deeds may not be exposed. <sup>21</sup>But 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.”

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

## **Sermon**

### **Hymn of the Day: ELW #666 "What Wondrous Love is This"**

- 1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul! What wondrous love is this, O my soul! What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord off bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?**
- 2. When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down, sinking down, when I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul, Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.**
- 3. To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing; to God and to the Lamb I will sing; to God and to the Lamb, who is the great I Am, while millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing, while millions join the theme, I will sing.**
- 4. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on; and when from death I'm free, I'll sing God's love for me, and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on; and through eternity I'll sing on.**

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## **Apostle's Creed**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come 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.**

**Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

## **Offering**

**Offering Hymn: ELW #686 "We Give Thee But Thine Own" 1<sup>st</sup> verse**

- 1. We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.**

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## **Offering Prayer**

**Jesus, you are the bread of life and the host of this meal. Bless these gifts that we have gathered that all people may know your goodness. Feed us not only with this holy food but with hunger for justice and peace. We pray this in your name. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

## **The Great Thanksgiving**

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 our thanks and praise.**

## **Preface**

## **Thanksgiving at the Table**

### **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.**

## **Invitation to Communion**

Bread for the journey. A feast for hungry hearts. Come!

## **Communion Distribution**

## Distribution Hymn: ELW #856 "How Great Thou Art"

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;

*Refrain:* Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee, how great thou art! How great thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee, how great thou art! How great thou art!

2. When through the woods and forest glades I wander, I hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees; when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze; *Refrain:*

3. But when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in, that on the cross my burden gladly bearing be bled and died to take away my sin; *Refrain:*

4. When Christ shall come, with shout of acclamation, and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart! Then I shall bow in humble adoration and there proclaim, "My God how great thou art!" *Refrain:*

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## Post-communion Blessing

### Prayer after Communion

#### Blessing

Beloved, we are God's own people, holy, washed, renewed. God bless you and keep you, shower you with mercy, fill you with courage, and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

## Sending Hymn: ELW #779 "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound"

1. Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!
3. Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come; 'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
4. The Lord has promised good to me; his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.
5. When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

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## Dismissal

Go in peace. Share your bread.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Postlude

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