

WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, March 26, 2023

And when your children say to you, “What do you mean by this service?” you shall say, “It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Exodus 12:26-27

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

ENTERING INTO WORSHIP

Greeting and Blessing*

Responsive Reading*

Psalm 5 (p. 786 in the *Trinity Hymnal*)

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my sighing.

Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

You are not a God who takes pleasure in evil; with you the wicked cannot dwell.

The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors.

But I, by your great mercy, will come into your house;
in reverence will I bow down toward your holy temple.

**Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies—
make straight your way before me.**

Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with destruction.

Their throat is an open grave; with their tongue they speak deceit.

Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall.

Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.

But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy.

Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

For surely, O LORD, you bless the righteous;

you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

* *Congregation is requested to stand, if able.*

The pastor will read the plain text; the congregation will read the bold text.

Give to Our God Immortal Praise

Give to our God immortal praise; mercy and truth are all his ways:
Wonders of grace to God belong; repeat his mercies in your song.

Give to the Lord of lords renown; the King of kings with glory crown:
His mercies ever shall endure, when lords and kings are known no more.

He built the earth, he spread the sky, and fixed the starry lights on high:
Wonders of grace to God belong; repeat his mercies in your song.

He fills the sun with morning light; he bids the moon direct the night:
His mercies ever shall endure, when suns and moons shall shine no more.

He sent his Son with pow'r to save from guilt and darkness and the grave:
Wonders of grace to God belong; repeat his mercies in your song.

Through this vain world he guides our feet, and leads us to his heav'nly seat:
His mercies ever shall endure, when this vain world shall be no more. Amen.

Congregational Confession of Sin

Leader: Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that your commandments are perfect, righteous, and good. They reveal your holiness, and they teach us how to live as your children in a way that pleases you.

All: We confess that we broke your commandments by our careless deeds, our hurtful words, and by the sinful affections of our hearts. We confess before you our disobedience and ingratitude, our pride and unbelief, and all our failures and shortcomings toward you and others.

Leader: Forgive us, we pray. Apart from Christ there is nothing in us that gives us reason for hope, yet in him we have received pardon and are clothed in his righteousness. Enable us to wholeheartedly believe your assurance of forgiveness and to live godly, righteous, and devout lives as we await our Savior's glorious return.

All: All glory be to you, O God, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.

Private Confession of Our Sins

Assurance of Forgiveness

1 John 4:9-11

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

ADORATION AND PRAISE

First Reading*

Genesis 23

Congregational Response (Hymn of the Month)

Hymn 242

Not All the Blood of Beasts

Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace, or wash away the stain:

But Christ, the heav'nly Lamb, takes all our sins away,
A sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand on that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand, and there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see the burdens thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree, and knows her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice to see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice, and sing his bleeding love. Amen.

Confession of Faith

The Nicene Creed (p. 846)

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of his Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
by whom all things were made;
who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures,
and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead;
whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified;
who spoke by the prophets;
and we believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church;
we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins;
and we look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Stewardship

Gloria Patri*

Hymn 735

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

THE WORD AND SACRAMENT

Second Reading*

Romans 5:12-21

Congregational Response (Psalm of the Month [Psalm 69:16, 17, 29, 30, 32-36])

Hymn 607

Thy Loving-Kindness, Lord, Is Good and Free

Thy lovingkindness, Lord, is good and free:
In tender mercy turn thou unto me;
Hide not thy face from me in my distress;
In mercy hear my pray'r, thy servant bless.

Needy and sorrowful, to thee I cry;
Let thy salvation set my soul on high:
Then I will sing and praise thy holy name;
My thankful song thy mercy shall proclaim.

With joy the meek shall see my soul restored;
Your heart shall live, ye saints that seek the Lord;
He helps the needy and regards their cries;
Those in distress the Lord will not despise.

Let heav'n above his grace and glory tell;
Let earth and sea and all that in them dwell:
Salvation to his people God will give,
And they that love his name with him shall live. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Sermon

Pastor Ben Muresan

“Faith When Facing Death”
Genesis 23

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

GOD’S BLESSING ON HIS PEOPLE

Hymn of Thanksgiving*

Hymn 252

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God:
All the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down:
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. Amen.

Benediction*

Congregational Benediction Response*

May the peace of God, our heav'nly Father,
And the grace of Christ, the risen Son,
And the fellowship of God, the Spirit
Keep our hearts and minds within his love.

*And to him be praise for his glorious reign;
From the depths of earth to the heights of heaven
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings.*

May this peace which passes understanding,
And this grace which makes us what we are,
And this fellowship of his communion,
Make us one in spirit and in heart.

*And to him be praise for his glorious reign;
From the depths of earth to the heights of heaven
We declare the name of the Lamb once slain—
Christ eternal, the King of kings. Amen.*

SERMON NOTES

“Faith When Facing Death” Genesis 23

1. Believers mourn when loved ones die. (vv. 1-2)
Ecclesiastes 12:1-8
Romans 5:12-21
2. Believers trust God even in the face of death. (vv. 3-18)
Hebrews 11:8-19
3. Believers look to Christ, who conquered death. (vv. 19-20)
Hebrews 11:19
1 Corinthians 15:20-23

HOME WORSHIP GUIDE

The daily reading schedule follows the One Year Bible Reading Plan.

Monday, March 27

Scripture: Deuteronomy 7:1 - 8:20; Luke 7:36 - 8:3; Psalm 69:1-18; Proverbs 12:1

Catechism: The Westminster Confession of Faith: Chapter 20

Pray for: Our federal, state, and local government leaders.

Tuesday, March 28

Scripture: Deuteronomy 9:1 - 10:22; Luke 8:4-21; Psalm 69:19-36; Proverbs 12:2-3

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 34

Pray for: Our military, police, fire, and medical personnel.

Wednesday, March 29

Scripture: Deuteronomy 11:1 - 12:32; Luke 8:22-39; Psalm 70:1-5; Proverbs 12:4

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 35

Pray for: Our covenant children and Christian military chaplains.

The churches in Malawi and persecuted Christians.

Thursday, March 30

Scripture: Deuteronomy 13:1 - 15:23; Luke 8:40 - 9:6; Psalm 71:1-24; Proverbs 12:5-7

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 36

Pray for: Our Elders, Deacons, Women's Ministry, & the PCA. Our pregnant moms.

Friday, March 31

Scripture: Deuteronomy 16:1 - 17:20; Luke 9:7-27; Psalm 72:1-20; Proverbs 12:8-9

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 37

Pray for: Our members who have ongoing health care needs.

Saturday, April 1

Scripture: Deuteronomy 18:1 - 20:20; Luke 9:28-50; Psalm 73:1-28; Proverbs 12:10

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 38

Pray for: The preaching and for our Sunday School teachers.

Sunday, April 2

Scripture: Deuteronomy 21:1 - 22:30; Luke 9:51 - 10:12; Psalm 74:1-23; Prov. 12:11

Catechism: The Westminster Shorter Catechism: Q/A 39

Pray for: Our worship this morning.

MISSIONS CORNER

Pray for our missionaries. Their prayer requests are sent out through the Prayer Chain and their newsletters are published in Grace Notes as they become available.

Ray & Michele Call | Presbyterian Church in Belize

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Dave & Darlene Eby | Africa Reformation Theol. Seminary Uganda

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LORD'S DAY DEVOTION AND QUESTIONS

The death of a loved one is always difficult. We mourn their loss as we feel the intense pain of living in a fallen world cursed by sin and death. Abraham felt this way when Sarah died. We read in Genesis 23:2 that “Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.” In his book titled *Living in the Gap Between Promise and Reality*, Iain Duguid writes:

What is your attitude toward death? Do you hide from it? Yes, it can often be tragic. Even when it is expected, the sense of loss is still real. We need not deny our feelings and pretend not to be sad. It is appropriate to mourn for our loved ones, just as Abraham mourned for Sarah. Yet we do not mourn as those who mourn without hope. Because Jesus has died for us, and was laid in another cave, we have hope. His tomb was borrowed, not purchased, because he wouldn't be needing it long. On the third day, he rose again as the firstfruits of all those who trust in him. Because of that, death is now the door through which those who believe in Jesus enter life. That reality was still far in the future for Abraham. But by buying this piece of land, Abraham was testifying to his faith in the enduring power of the promises of God. He had faith that not even death could separate him from the love of God. As John Calvin puts it, “While they themselves were silent, the sepulcher cried aloud that death was no obstacle to their entering on the possession of what God had promised.”

1. For review, read Genesis 22. What was God's purpose for testing Abraham? How is testing different from tempting? How did the ram that God provided as Isaac's substitute point to Christ?
2. Read Genesis 23:1-2 and Ecclesiastes 12:1-8. What do these passages reveal about death and mourning?
3. Read Romans 5:12-21. How did death come into the world? How does the Apostle Paul compare and contrast Adam and Christ? How should faith in Christ provide comfort for Christians when facing death?
4. Read Genesis 23:3-18. What do these negotiations reveal about Abraham's faith in God? How does Hebrews 11:8-16 explain Abraham's understanding of the land of promise?
5. Read Genesis 23:19-20. Why do we bury the dead? How does this act reveal our belief in the resurrection when Christ returns?