

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Snakebitten

March 14 & 15, 2015

AS WE GATHER

The Fourth Sunday in Lent has sometimes been considered an oasis in the midst of Lent. With John 3:16 at the center of today's Gospel, we find a refreshing oasis as we hear again those beautiful, life-changing, hope-filled words, "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." When snakebitten in the wilderness because of their own sin, the Israelites looked up to the bronze serpent given by God, and they lived. When we are snakebitten—troubled by some persistent sin or burdened by some unforeseen event that threatens to overwhelm us—we can remember that God has given us His Son, lifted up on the cross, to look upon, to trust, and thereby to live now and eternally. Made alive in Christ, "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). A refreshing oasis indeed!

WELCOME

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you:
Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought,
but rather think of yourself with sober judgment,
in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.
(Romans 12:3, NIV)

FELLOWSHIP GREETING

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #905 "Come, Thou Almighty King" *Rise last stanza*

Come, Thou Almighty King, Help us Thy name to sing; Help us to praise;
Father all glorious, O'er all victorious, Come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

Come, Thou incarnate Word, Gird on Thy mighty sword; Our prayer attend.
Come and Thy people bless, And give Thy Word success,
And let Thy righteousness On us descend.

Come, holy Comforter. Thy sacred witness bear In this glad hour!
Thou, who almighty art, Now rule in ev'ry heart,
And ne'er from us depart, Spirit of pow'r.

(Rise) To Thee, great One in Three, Eternal praises be Hence evermore!
Thy sov'reign majesty May we in glory see, And to eternity Love and adore.

OPENING SENTENCES *Based on Ephesians 2:1, 4–5*

Pastor: Following the course of this world,

People: we were dead in the trespasses and sins in which we once walked.

Pastor: But God, being rich in mercy, made us alive together with Christ—

People: by grace we have been saved.

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 51:4; Ephesians 2:8–10*

Pastor: Let us confess our sins to God our Father. Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean.

People: Against you, O LORD, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Pastor: We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.

People: Against you, O LORD, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Pastor: We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

People: Against you, O LORD, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Pastor: We justly deserve your present and eternal punishment.

People: Against you, O LORD, have we sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

Pastor: For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways to the glory of your holy name.

People: Amen.

Pastor: By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Dear Lord, when the Israelites spoke against you and Moses, and you sent fiery serpents among them, you heard their cries for mercy and gave them the bronze serpent on the pole to look upon and live. Hear our cries for mercy too, and empower us by the gift of your only Son, lifted up on the cross for us, to be your workmanship, created for good works; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

✠ **WORD** ✠

OLD TESTAMENT READING Numbers 21:4–9 (Moses and the bronze snake)

They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the desert? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!" Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

EPISTLE Ephesians 2:1–10 ("God raised up with Christ.")

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from

yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

8:00 CHOIR ANTHEM "Immortal, Invisible" Arr. Robert Sterling

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL John 3:14–21 ("The Son of Man must be lifted up.")

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

(Be seated)

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON HYMN #425 "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 tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!

SERMON

"Lifted Up That We Might Live"

John 3:14-21

(Rise)

APOSTLES' CREED *(found on the inside back cover of the hymnal)*

(Be seated)

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, *please sign our attendance book* located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle. You may check the register to see the names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Because God has sent His son into the world that we might be saved through Him, our heavenly Father promises to hear and answer our prayers. So let us pray for the Church and for all people.

After each petition:

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy.

People: hear our prayer.

At the conclusion of the prayers:

Pastor:one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

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O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;

Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

HYMN #744 "Amazing Grace"

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!

The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be, As long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;
His grace has brought me safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail In heaven's joy and peace.

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'd first begun.

HYMN #571 "God Loved the World So That He Gave"

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.

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.

God would not have the sinner die; His Son with saving grace is nigh;
His Spirit in the Word declares How we in Christ are heaven's heirs.

Be of good cheer, for God's own Son Forgives all sins which you have done;
And, justified by Jesus' blood, Your Baptism grants the highest good.

If you are sick, if death is near, This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
Christ Jesus saves your soul from death; That is the firmest ground of faith.

Glory to God the Father, Son, And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To You, O blessed Trinity, Be praise now and eternally!

HYMN #566 “By Grace I’m Saved”

By grace I’m saved, grace free and boundless; My soul, believe and doubt it not.
Why stagger at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?
No! Then this word must true remain: By grace you too will life obtain.

By grace! None dare lay claim to merit; Our works and conduct have no worth.
God in His love sent our Redeemer, Christ Jesus, to this sinful earth;
His death did for our sins atone, And we are saved by grace alone.

By grace God’s Son, our only Savior, Came down to earth to bear our sin.
Was it because of your own merit That Jesus died your soul to win?
No, it was grace, and grace alone, That brought Him from His heav’nly throne.

By grace! This ground of faith is certain; As long as God is true, it stands.
What saints have penned by inspiration, What in His Word our God commands,
Our faith in what our God has done Depends on grace-grace through His Son.

By grace to timid hearts that tremble, In tribulation’s furnace tried,
By grace, in spite of fear and trouble, The Father’s heart is open wide.
Where could I help and strength secure If grace were not my anchor sure?

By grace! On this I’ll rest when dying; In Jesus’ promise I rejoice;
For though I know my heart’s condition, I also know my Savior’s voice.
My heart is glad, all grief has flown Since I am saved by grace alone.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: O Lord, we thank you for your abundant mercy and love for us, which,
even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with
Christ. Having received your grace and forgiveness in this Holy Sacrament,
send us forth now to do the good works you have already prepared to be
our way of life; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and
reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in
order that the world might be saved through Him. Whoever believes in
Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Baptized into Christ, this
promised life is yours. The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make
His face shine on you and be gracious to you; The LORD look upon you
with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #922 “Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Go, My children, with My blessing, Never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are my own.
In My love’s baptismal river I have made you Mine forever.
Go, My children, with My blessing – You are My own.

Go, My children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, What I can cure.
Here you heard My dear Son’s story; Here you touched Him, Saw His glory.
Go, My children, sins forgiven, At peace and pure.

Go, My children, fed and nourished, Closer to Me;
Grow in love and love by serving, Joyful and free.
Here My Spirit’s power filled you; Here His tender comfort stilled you.
Go, My children, fed and nourished, Joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you And give you peace.
I the Lord will smile upon you And give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, My children; I will keep you And give you peace.

Preacher
Liturgist
Lectors
Acolytes
Organist
Choir Director
Music Coordinator

Pastor Harold Bender
Pastor Gregg Stanton
Debbie Ulbing, Marc Stefanic, Jim Laux
Elena Gonzales-Clark, Claire Igielski, Jennifer Moyle
Roger Gottschalk
Nancy Hoelke
Kim Woller