

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
40 DAYS OF LENT - WEEK 5
Pastor Christian Magnell, Pastor John R. Hanson
March 17, 2024, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson, Musician

CALL TO WORSHIP

"More Precious than Silver"

Celebration Singers

THE COMMON THREAD

When God works faith within us, we begin to fear, love, and trust him. He puts his law within us, writing his word on our hearts. So we are inspired to meditate on this word, to store it up in our hearts so that we will not sin against God. But when we do sin, he forgives. He is just to do so because Jesus, being God in human flesh, became the true priest of the truest sacrifice. Our Great High Priest (Heb 4:14-16) was appointed by God to offer himself for the sin of the world. He came to serve and to give his life as payment for sins that he did not commit. Having stored up in our hearts such a wondrous revelation, we too are now compelled to become servants to our neighbors.

THEME AND VERSE

Lord, we wrestle with the thought of doing things differently. We know that the life we cling to is only a half-life. Only you, O Lord, can give us a true, full life. Teach us to let go of our agendas and assumptions. Help us to let go of self-righteousness and notions of power. Give us courage to try new things. Encourage - even push us - to let go of ourselves so we can fully embrace you, Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains a single grain;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit. (John 12:24)*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: Mark 10:[32-34] 35-45

The way of the Lord is not about fame or power, it is about humble obedience and service. This includes suffering, if only to suffer the guilt of our sin. Jesus patiently explains to his disciples that this is why he had come to earth and was willing to suffer and die as an obedient servant of his Father. His suffering death would mean the salvation of the world. Our response should then be faithful service since our Lord himself came to serve, most notably by giving his own life for us all.

[{The disciples} were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. And they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. And taking the twelve again, he began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man

will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles. 34And they will mock him and spit on him and flog him and kill him. And after three days he will rise."]

35And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" 37And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" 39And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, 40but to sit at my right hand

or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." 41And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. 42And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of God

as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord desires a new covenant with the people of God. Let us open our hearts and minds, creating a blank space for God to write upon.

Lord God, we do not contemplate the depth of your humility on the cross because it would cause us to contemplate our lack of depth. We are unprepared for the magnitude of your glory because we are so attached to our life in this world. We are comfortable giving you some of our time and possessions this morning, but we would prefer that you not write your law on our hearts. Save us, Lord! Save us from our sins.

The Lord desires to forgive us and remember our sin no more. God, the heavenly Father, wants this badly enough to empower his only begotten son to be lifted up, to lift him up on a cross, and to lift him up in a resurrection from the dead. Because of Jesus Christ's submission, he has become the source of eternal salvation and will draw all people to himself. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we all might be drawn to God who desires to write upon our hearts.

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

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"Friend"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Restore to us the joy of your salvation, Lord. May refugees be restored to safety. May flooded land be restored to fertile ground. May broken hearts be restored to wholeness. May fearful lives be restored to peaceful rest. May the fatigue of our compassion be restored to the perseverance of hope! Restore to us the joy of your salvation, Lord. Grant us a willing spirit to sustain us. Amen

READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

The great promise of the Scriptures is that a new covenant will be made with God's people. It will not be like the old commitments because the new covenant will not be able to be broken by people. This new pledge will be sealed with God's own blood. Therefore, the covenant will depend upon God alone. People will not nullify the new testament. The result will be (and has become) that God's law will be written upon their hearts so that their spirits will keep turning and moving toward God. They will know God personally and intimately because he will forgive their faults and forget their sins forever.

31 {Thus says the Lord,} “Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after

those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

READING: Hebrews 5:1-10

Even as the priests of old were chosen by God, Jesus, his highest priest, was also appointed. Jesus was not a priest like Aaron, nor was he of Aaron's lineage. Instead, he was of the order of Melchizedek, that priest and king of ancient Salem, who has no stated bloodline. His order is without end. Jesus is this kind of high priest. Becoming like us — though perfectly holy — he is able to offer up an acceptable sacrifice for all of us.

1 For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward since he himself is beset with weakness.

3 Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people.

4 And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”; 6 as he says also in another place, “You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.” 7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. 9 And being made

perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, 10 being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

HYMN

“Ancient Words”

Holy words long preserved for our walk in this world,
They resound with God's own heart; oh, let the ancient words impart.
Words of life, words of hope give us strength, help us cope;
In this world where'er we roam ancient words will guide us home.

***Ancient words ever true, changing me and changing you;
We have come with open hearts, oh, let the ancient words impart.***

Holy words of our faith handed down to this age, came to us through sacrifice;
Oh, heed the faithful words of Christ.

SERMON

HYMN

“Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”

Burgundy # 73

Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;
Free to all, a healing stream flows from Calvary's mountain.

***In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my raptured soul shall find rest beyond the river.***

Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;
There the bright and Morning Star sheds its beams around me.

Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day with its shadows o'er me.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER AT RECEIVING OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

God of promise, press your blessing into our palms— right, then left— that we may see its mark imprinted into our skin, the lines of a cross as if pointing to you, the treasure that has been in our grasp all along. May these riches we gift be not what we hold but what we release, what falls from our open hands be used to release a force, your love, to change the world. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As you have done in us, Lord God, may we do with you in the world. You sent your redeeming son to us to show us the way to bring your kingdom. May this meal of forgiveness be the start of something remarkable, something empowering, something healing in us and then go out to those whose lives we impact in our daily witness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

BENEDICTION

God has promised to create clean hearts and renewed spirits in us. Let our renewed vision see the places where God leads us; let our clean hearts put an end to the things that pain others. Let us share in healing and deliverance as instruments of peace. Empowered with the sureness of God's presence, we walk in the knowledge that might initiate a glorious transformation of this world through our miraculous actions.

We live, empowered by God's love.

May God strengthen us with the knowledge of his presence. May Christ be with us and never leave us. And may the Spirit renew us in our witness to the world around us.

Amen. We go in Christ's name!

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Listening for the Promise Weekly Devotional Fifth Sunday in Lent — March 17, 2024

“So, also, Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’; as he says also in another place, ‘You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek.’” - Hebrews 5:5-6 -

Queen Victoria of England was only nineteen years old when she was crowned; until that day she was always under supervision. Her ascension to the throne was the first time she was free. She rebelled at first, partying late into the night. In retrospect, she considered that time “the least satisfactory time in her whole life.” She eventually learned what it meant to be a good leader, surrounding herself with strong advisors and helpers, including her husband Albert. Together they made the nation strong; they prospered in economics, industry, science, culture, and the military. All the while she managed to keep a loving home, actively involved with her nine children.

What made Victoria a successful leader? How was she able to prosper a nation while maintaining a loving home? At all times she sought the best for her country and people. She did not seek power, but rather humbled herself, serving her nation for sixty-four years in humility. She consulted her advisors who helped her make the right decisions. Her success was an achievement of character; her reign was one of honesty and simplicity. Her humility did not make her weak; she was a strong leader who ruled in the best interest of her people.

It is so easy to fall into the trap of power. Many kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers, bishops and pastors, CEOs and governors think that their position gives them the authority to control the lives of those over whom they rule instead of remembering that they have been called to serve. We don't even have to be in a position of leadership to fall into the temptation of controlling those around us. We think we know it all, and that eventually leads us to become self-appointed rulers.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us that Jesus also knew himself to be a servant. He was identified as the Son of God with God's own voice. He was obedient to the One who sent Him, sharing the same will as he continues to reign as eternal Priest and King. He did not choose these roles; He is the eternal fulfillment of all God's promises.