

Our Worship Service for Sunday, March 22nd The Fourth Sunday of Lent

Confession and Forgiveness



In the name of the Father, and the son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.

Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart, and confess our sins unto God.

(Silence for reflection and self-examination.)

God of steadfast love,

We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed.

We have wandered from your ways. We have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to forgive those who have sinned against us.

Have mercy on us, create in us new hearts, and restore to us the joy of your salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord says, “I will answer when you call, I will show you my salvation.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, lead us to love one another, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

Greeting



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

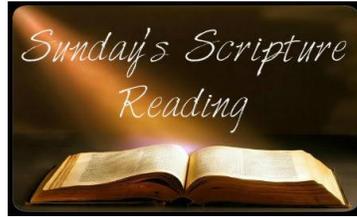
Amen.

Prayer of the Day

God of all mercy, by your power to heal and to forgive, graciously cleanse us from all sin and make us strong; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The Lessons for the Day



Ephesians 5:8-14

⁸For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light.

Live as children of light—

⁹for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.

¹⁰Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.

¹¹Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.

¹²For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly;

¹³but everything exposed by the light becomes visible,

¹⁴for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

‘ Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’

Psalm 142

1 With my voice I cry to the Lord;
with my voice I make supplication to the Lord.

**2 I pour out my complaint before him;
I tell my trouble before him.**

3 When my spirit is faint, you know my way.
In the path where I walk they have hidden a trap for me.

**4 Look on my right hand and see—
there is no one who takes notice of me;
no refuge remains to me;
no one cares for me.**

5 I cry to you, O Lord;
I say, ‘You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living.’

**6 Give heed to my cry,
for I am brought very low.
Save me from my persecutors,
for they are too strong for me.**

7 Bring me out of prison,
so that I may give thanks to your name.
The righteous will surround me,
for you will deal bountifully with me.

John 9:1-41 “Glory to You, O Lord”

1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.

2 His disciples asked him,
‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents,
that he was born blind?’

- 3 Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned;
he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.
4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day;
night is coming when no one can work.
5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'
6 When he had said this,
he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva
and spread the mud on the man's eyes,



- 7 saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent).
Then he went and washed and came back able to see.
8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar
began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?'
9 Some were saying, 'It is he.'
Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.'
He kept saying, 'I am the man.'
10 But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?'
11 He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes,
and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash."
Then I went and washed and received my sight.'
12 They said to him, 'Where is he?'
He said, 'I do not know.'
13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.
14 Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes.
15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight.
He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.'
16 Some of the Pharisees said,
'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.'
But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?'
And they were divided.
17 So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him?'
It was your eyes he opened.'
He said, 'He is a prophet.'
18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight
until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight
19 and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind?
How then does he now see?'
20 His parents answered,
'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind;
21 but we do not know how it is that now he sees,
nor do we know who opened his eyes.
Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.'
22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews;

- for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.
- 23 Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.'
- 24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.'
- 25 He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.'
- 26 They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?'
- 27 He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?'
- 28 Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.
- 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.'
- 30 The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes.
- 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.
- 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.
- 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.'
- 34 They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.
- 35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'
- 36 He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.'
- 37 Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.'
- 38 He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshiped him.



- 39 Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.'
- 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?'
- 41 Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin.'

But now that you say, “We see”, your sin remains.

This is the Word of Our Lord!
Thanks be to God!

The Message for the Day



When St. Paul says that:

“For once you were darkness,
but now in the Lord you are light.”

why must he then instruct them to,

“Live as children of light?”

Does this not raise the deep concern, the disconcerting truth,
that we can be ‘in the Lord’s light,’ and yet not live accordingly?

As we will see, the answer is “Yes!”

We can be in the Lord’s light and still fail to live as if we are in the Lord’s light!

Yet, this disconcerting truth of our failure does not need to be our reality!

For Paul proclaims unto us that

“the fruit of the light is found in all”

and he proclaims that this reality

“is good and right and true.”

True for every single one of us! For our Lord’s light is “found in all!”

Yet, to live as if we are in his light is easier said than done.

Even so, the possibility is very real.

Difficulty and possibility often go hand in hand;

with difficulties leading to the fulfilling of wonderful possibilities.

Thus, our beloved St. Paul calls upon each of us to

“Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.”

“Finding” what is pleasing to the Lord might prove to be among those things in life that are difficult;
and yet will also prove to be among those things that are wonderfully fulfilled!

Paul’s word, “try,” implies both challenge and possibility.

Also, the word, “try,” implies exercise and practice, experimentation and risk taking,

and the developing of good behavioral habits. (And, of course, spiritual behaviors too!)

Accordingly, living as a person of the Lord’s light takes being intentional, and hard work.

Now for us Christians, it not really true that “practice makes perfect.”

Rather what is true for us is that ‘practicing to be the Lord’s light is “pleasing to God.”’

One of the key practices that Paul calls us to do is to

“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness,
but instead expose them.”

All too often these words are taken to mean that we are not to take part in the dark and unfruitful works of others. And when we see such others engaging in such God-displeasing behaviors, we are to expose them. To some extent, this interpretation can ring true.

Yet, Paul is calling us to practice what is pleasing to God.

So these words about “unfruitful works of darkness” and “exposing” them, are spoken to us for our own benefit.

In other words, Paul is saying:

When you produce, practice, fall into, do unfruitful works of darkness,
expose yourself!

O, my Lord of light, the difficulty of practicing that!

When I produce, practice, fall into, do unfruitful works of darkness,
I am to expose myself!

To understand this great difficulty, let us take in more of what St. Paul is leading us to.

Paul goes on to say: (note: Paul is using his method of speaking indirectly in order to soften the direct and challenging implication that the readers of his letter are to pick up on.)

“It is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly.”

How true, If we speak of what we do in secret, will we not be ashamed of ourselves?

And so, do we not have our little, and sometimes dark, secrets?

So, how then, in the face of such shame, do we dare to expose ourselves?

Paul goes on, being our guide, saying,

“But everything exposed by the light becomes visible,
for everything that becomes visible is light.”

In other words, Paul is guiding us into the Christian life of confession!

We are called to expose our dark fruits to God with words of confession and repentance.

We can, and we will do this difficult work of exposing, if we will only be honest with ourselves about our wrong doings. (Whether our wrong doings are intentional or not, we are to so expose them to God.)

We can, and we will do this difficult work of exposing, if we ask for faith to trust in God’s grace.

Now, what is this grace of God that we should strive for such trust in.

O, my fellow believers, let us note well how Paul begins his call for us to be pleasing to God.

Paul said that:

“For once you were darkness,
but now in the Lord you are light.”

Paul is proclaiming to each and everyone of us that we already are “in the Lord,”
and thus, ‘we are light.’

We can, and we will do this difficult work of exposing, because there is this sense,
that in our Lord, in Jesus, we are already in God’s grace.

O, the wonder of God’s love! The possibilities that God’s love can and will make fulfilled in our lives!

Are we not, in and through the Cross of Christ, set free to seek what is pleasing to God?
In truth, we are. For we are “in the Lord!”
And our being in the Lord, already has us pleasing God,
even before we begin to, as the word said; “try.”

Do we want to be pleasing to God?
Then let us take on the challenges and the possibilities that are set before us.
Let us exercise and practice our spiritual and moral ways.
Let us confess our wrong doings.
Let us believe in the wonder of God’s loving grace revealed in the Cross of Jesus.
Let us bear forth the fruits of our Lord’s light.
Let us be who we are. For we are the Lord’s light.

Paul concludes:

“Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

With realities of death that always threatens, yet can not darken the Light of Our Lord, we pray:

O God, let us do “the work which you have given us to do while it is day, before that night comes when no one can work. And when our last hour shall come, support us by your power and receive us into your everlasting kingdom, where, with your Son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, you live and reign, God forever. Amen! (*LBW, Service of the Word, p.129-30*)



The Apostles’ Creed

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ.
Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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 (*by Worship Assistant, Brian Beaupre*)



Let us pray for the whole people of God n Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, thank you for not only this new day of life, but also for the many blessings you have bestowed on us. We pray, O Lord, that we may be of service to you, not only this day, but forever. Show us your will, o Lord, where you would have us go to spread the good news.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we lift to you all of our brother's and sisters on our prayer list and those we hold dear in our hearts. Heal them, o Lord, that they may continue to praise you and exalt your holy name.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we lift to you two of our families here at Redeemer, . Praying or your continued love and blessings, your peace and guidance on them. And we pray that they may continue to serve you and praise you here through the ministries of Redeemer.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for our men and women of the Armed Forces. Bless them in their endeavor to bring peace to war torn countires. Keep the out of harm's way, and bring them back safely to us.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we lift to you all of our government officials, praying that they would lead us with honesty, integrity, and love, for all your people.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we pray, O Lord, that this epidemic we are in, will soon be over. We pray that the doctors and scientists will find a cure, a serum that will cure us in this troubling time. Have mercy on the souls that have gone before us.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Father, we pray for all brothers and sisters of the cloth; thanking hem for answering the call to serve you and to serve others. Bless them, O Lord, that they may continue bringing lost souls into the fold of faith. We especially pray for Pastor George, that you may keep him in good health, that he may continue to lead us on our journey to salvation.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Please offer up here, your own prayers of concerns, petitions, and thanks.

Please offer up a prayer for Betty Stenson; her beloved husband, Grant, passed away earlier this week.

He was suffering with both, heart and lung issues. Because of the Covid-19 virus situation, funeral arrangements are being delayed.

Please offer up also, your prayers regarding the Covid-19 virus situation in our country, and across the globe.

Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our 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.



Benediction

P: The blessing of God, who brings you each day to new birth, who satisfies your thirst with living water, who breathes life into you by the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Goodness and mercy shall follow you. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

On our church's Facebook page for tomorrow will be a study process for today's Gospel reading. Join in with the back and forth conversation we will have with one another throughout the week!

If you have not "yet befriended" Redeemer's Facebook page with your own personal Facebook page, do so now. That way you can be notified of the back and forth conversation regarding this intriguing story of Jesus, a blind man, and the Jewish religious leaders of his day.