

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

God's Wisdom

Wanted: Foolish Preaching

March 7, 2021



AS WE GATHER

When the Israelites were encamped by Mount Sinai, just out of slavery in Egypt and far from the Promised Land, God wisely gave them the Ten Commandments. They are engraved in our historic churches and capitol buildings. Their perfect demands require a Savior for us. Jesus was so jealous for God's Law that He cleansed the temple before cleansing us of our sin by giving the temple of His body. In His wisdom, God did what we could not: He kept His own Law for us and then chose us to be the Body of Christ today. None of us has kept the commandments; we and our spiritual ancestors reflect our weaknesses in faith and action. But in the process, God's wisdom shows forth: When we are weak, He is strong. Today is a day to boast about God's grace and His Son, Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God. The Church has what the world doesn't want: God's Law, which always accuses us sinners, and His Gospel, which allows for no boasting on our part. To this day, Jewish leaders teach that God will not demand what we cannot achieve. What a stumbling block, preaching a Messiah who becomes a sacrifice for our failings, both in our actions and our very nature. The polytheistic society of Paul's day and the secular one of ours both find the Law an encumbrance, preferring to judge by their own standards (or lack of them). What folly, our society believes, to preach a God who chooses people whom everyone knows to be weak. Today is a day for foolish preaching: Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God.

✂ PREPARATION ✂

PRAYERS OF PREPARATION:

Loving God, we come to you in worship and thanksgiving. We praise you loving and eternal God for your love of all people expressed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You are greater than we can understand; open our eyes that we may see the wonderful truths you have shown to us in Jesus. You are more loving than our hearts can respond to; help us to give ourselves to you in worship so that we learn what you want us to be. You are wiser than we can know; still our minds as we worship you so that we can understand the things

you are saying to us. Loving God, in Jesus you chose to come to the world in humility. You chose the path the world saw as foolish. You used what the world considered weak. We worship and adore you. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATED:

As a Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) church, we believe and confess that through the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper we receive the true body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the elements of bread and wine. As we commune with faith and repentance, we receive the forgiveness of sins and power to amend our sinful lives. If you confess the same belief, we invite you to our fellowship of the Lord’s Supper.

WELCOME:

WELCOME TO WORSHIP.... We worship because we can, we worship because we hope, we worship because we know our vulnerability, we worship, it is the only strength we have for the journey. May God’s promises comfort and sustain you on this journey of life through this Lenten Season. The Lord has said, "Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. He said, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you." We will call upon the Lord and seek the Lord. We are striving to grow and be all that God has called us to be. Let us worship the Lord!
Welcome!

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

PSALM *Psalm 19:7–11*

Pastor: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;

People: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

Pastor: the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

People: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

Pastor: the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

People: the just decrees of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.

Pastor: More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;
People: **sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.**

Pastor: Moreover, by them is Your servant warned;
People: **in keeping them there is great reward.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 19:12–14*

Pastor: When we use the Ten Commandments and other parts of the moral code as a mirror, we see that we have fallen from the perfection of God's good creation and His perfect Law.

Who can discern his errors?
People: **Declare me innocent from hidden faults.**

Pastor: Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;
People: **let them not have dominion over me!**

Pastor: Our gracious Lord has promised full and free forgiveness to all who call out to our heavenly Father in His name. Let us therefore confess our sins to God, our heavenly Father.
People: **O God, we confess that we have sinned against You and one another in our thinking, speaking, and acting. Worse, in our fallen nature, we are sinful and unclean, and in the eyes of many we are weak, lowly people. But because You have graciously chosen us and worked faith in our hearts, we humbly ask for mercy for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive, renew, and lead us in paths of righteousness.**

Pastor: The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. We preach Christ crucified, and for us the word of the cross is the power of God. 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. Thanks be to God.**

Pastor: Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.
People: **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

✠ **WORD** ✠

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God, who in wisdom created us, though we would become weak and rebellious creatures, knowing that Your Son's sacrifice of Himself on the cross would be necessary to save us,

People: **keep us strong in faith, so that we preach only Christ crucified and boast only in Your strong love and mercy toward us,**

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Exodus 20:1–17* (The Ten Commandments)

Leader: And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

People: **"You shall have no other gods before Me.**

Leader: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for

People: **I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.**

People: **"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain,**

Leader: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

People: **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.**

Leader: Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD

made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

People: **“Honor your father and your mother,**

Leader: that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

People: **“You shall not murder. “You shall not commit adultery. “You shall not steal. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”**

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

GRADUAL *Hebrews 12:2*

Leader: O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 1:18–31* (The foolish wisdom of God)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *John 2:19*

Leader: Destroy this temple,

People: **and in three days I will raise it up.**

HOLY GOSPEL *John 2:13–22 (23–25)*

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the second chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SELECTION**Minister Terry Dale****SERMON****SELECTION****Minister Terry Dale****(We Bring Our Tithes and Offering To The Lord)****CREED** *Nicene Creed*

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and 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 men 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 sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I 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 worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ✕ of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Leader: Let us pray for the Church here and around the world and for people everywhere in their various circumstances.

Lord over all, we give thanks that the heavens declare Your glory. And we pray Your blessings on all who seek ways to use the resources of Your good creation to feed the hungry, heal the sick, and shelter the homeless. Guide them toward bountiful harvests and life-saving technologies. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: O Lord, who brought Your people Israel out of slavery in Egypt, hear the prayer of those who long for freedom from oppressive regimes, false imprisonment, poverty, and social discrimination. Awaken a desire for peace, justice, and human dignity in the citizens and leaders of the nations. Give them compassionate eyes so that they may seek to help one another, relieving hunger and despair with loving and sharing actions. Guide and protect armed forces deployed and those who work for peace and security in

our local communities. Open our eyes to the vocation we have as people of faith each day. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Leader: Wise and loving heavenly Father, who chose those whom the world considered foolish, weak, lowly, and despised to be joined in the Body of Christ, give us Your strength and wisdom. Open doors of opportunity for the Church to preach Christ crucified and risen no matter the form of opposition they encounter, so that many will come to faith. Strengthen clergy and lay leaders to focus not on institutions or statistics but on the righteousness, sanctification, and redemption our Savior won in His gracious sacrifice for us in grace and love. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Leader: We ask Your gracious answers to the prayers of those near and dear to us, [*including . . .*]. Visit, relieve, console, and uplift them according to Your plans, using us where possible as part of the answer to their petitions. These and any other things You would have us ask of You, heavenly Father, grant to us for the sake of the bitter sufferings and death of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, for in wisdom, mercy, and love You sent Your Son into human flesh to die and rise on our behalf. Now Your great salvation may be proclaimed to all people in the preaching of Christ crucified, through whom with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

Pastor: Isaiah wrote, “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. . . . And one called to another and said:

People: **‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’”**

Pastor: When Jesus entered Jerusalem, “those who went before and those who followed were shouting,

People: **‘Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!’”**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20;*

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

LORD’S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

PAX DOMINI

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

People: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION We All Partake of the Lord’s Supper Together

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less” [*TLH 370 – Soft Music*]

POST-COMMUNION CANTICLE *Luke 2:29–32*

Pastor: As Simeon held the baby Jesus in the temple, he said,

People: **“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.” Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-

People: kindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, **and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You;**

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: May God almighty—the Father who created all that exists; the Son, by whose death we have life; and the Holy Spirit, who has worked faith in our hearts that we may boast only in the Lord—bless you and keep you, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Music **“In the Cross of Christ I Glory” TLH 354**

1 In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time; all the light of sacred story gathers round its head sublime.

2 When the woes of life o'ertake me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy, never shall the cross forsake me. Lo! it glows with peace and joy.

3 When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way, from the cross the radiance streaming adds more luster to the day.

4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified; peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**