

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 13, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “Just as I Am”

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. 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 AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *1 Kings 11:1-10*

Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, “You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did not wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem. And so he did for all his foreign wives, who made offerings and sacrificed to their gods. And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE 2 Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 12:38-42

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twelfth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON “Son of Solomon” 1 Kings 11:1-10

- I. The Life of Solomon (1 Kings 1-10)
 - What are some of Solomon’s accomplishments?
 - What are some of the things he wrote and did?
- II. The Fall of Solomon (1 Kings 11:1-10)
 - What turned his heart?
 - What did Solomon end up doing?
 - What lights attract us?
- III. One Greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:38-42)
 - What is the cry of victory?
- IV. Finishing Strong (Hebrews 12:1-2)
 - What does finishing strong mean?

Over the last two weeks, we have been exploring, “Who Is Jesus?” We have taken a look at David, Abraham, Isaac, and Judah. Pastor Prin did his interpretation with Job, and today, we focus on another famous son. He comes at the end of Matthew 1:5–6. **“Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah’s wife.”** Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of Solomon. What does that mean?

It’s easy as pie to begin. It’s tougher than nails to finish. Pick your pie. It seemed that easy for Solomon. When his father David died, pretender to the throne was his half-brother Adonijah, whom Solomon eliminated with ease. His other enemies, Joab (the commander of the army), Abiathar the priest, and Shimei—no problem. He was anointed by Zakok the priest as king of Israel at the Gihon Spring, and backed by Nathan the Prophet. Solomon came out of the starting blocks like a greyhound after jackrabbits. All the money was on Solomon, he, the tenth of David’s seventeen sons.

In 1 Kings 3:7 Solomon calls himself—in Hebrew, a *naar*—just a kid. But we would call Solomon a kid wonder. He spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs numbered 1,005. In addition to that, he wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and penned a few psalms. Solomon described plant life from the cedars of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He gained wisdom and knowledge were world renowned. He gained control of two main international trading routes—the Via Maris along the Mediterranean Coast and the King’s Highway that connected Elath to the south with Damascus to the north. The result, according to 1 Kings 4, was that **“From Dan to Beersheba, Judah and Israel lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree”**. This is an Old Testament way of saying that the stock market was up; unemployment was down; and everyone was living well! In 1 Kings 10 we even hear, **“...silver was not considered as anything in the days of Solomon”** and **“the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stone....”** Life was good for the people under Solomon. Is there anything he can’t do, or anything he doesn’t know?

Solomon is also the one who is blessed to build the temple, and he goes all out for it. Everything is overlaid with gold. The finest stones and wood were used as materials. They were engravings of cherubim, palm trees, open flowers, and pomegranates. The temple vessels and furniture were made of precious metals, like bronze and gold. The construction took seven years, and when it was done, Solomon had a dedication for the ages. There were 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 lambs sacrificed at the dedication, with a feast to follow! The boy could build.

For the first ten chapters of 1 Kings, Solomon is awesome! He is the man! But. But. But. In the eleventh chapter of 1 Kings we have these words: **“Solomon had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray”**.

I remember as a kid when my family moved to our new house on Hale Lane. We had a large backyard that ended at the Fox River. For some reason or another, our yard changed at night. It became mosquito and gnat infested. Once the sun set, you really couldn’t go back there! So, my Dad bought a bug zapper, one of those ones that was a fluorescent blue and white, that zapped the bugs on impact. I remember the first night he had it on; it zapped all evening! The next night, when it turned it back on, it didn’t work. It didn’t glow. When he checked it out, it was because it was that full of bugs! The tray was pretty full, too. At some point, one would have to think that the bugs would say, “Wait a minute, I’m not going to blindly follow my desires toward that light.” But you know what? Bugs don’t do that. And you know what? Neither does Solomon!

Forgetting the words of his father David in Psalm 27:1, **“The LORD is my light and my salvation,”** Solomon flies toward other lights—1,000 to be exact. The result? (ZAP!) 1 Kings 11:3 says that “his wives turned his heart.” They turned his heart to follow Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites, and Chemosh the detestable god of Moab. Solomon worshipped these deities. He built them shrines and altars. It seems unthinkable since Solomon had seen God twice, and had been warned about this by God Himself. It seems unthinkable that the wisest man, the man who wrote, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” would, and could, do this. Where did the fear go? How did the love dry up? How did the devotion fade, and wither? Solomon headed towards those lights, and then...Zap! There goes Solomon in all his glory, and there goes his kingdom. The only reason why it’s not taken from Solomon now is that God couldn’t do that to David!

It’s easy as pie to begin. It’s tougher than nails to finish. Like Solomon, we’re great at beginning, aren’t we? We begin with unbridled enthusiasm, high energy, a never-say-die attitude. Like hot knives into butter, we tear into new projects, new classes, new relationships, you name it. But. But. But. As time goes on, we get weary, fatigued, and impatient and bored. Like Solomon, we head to new lights. We zoom toward different lights, dazzling lights, deadly lights—at least 1,000 of them. Lights of pride, power, position, prestige, prominence, and even pouting over poor, poor pitiful me. Then zap goes the joy of our salvation. Zap goes passion for the lost, and zeal for the Word. We all know what it’s like to fly toward godless lights and suddenly we find ourselves lying in a tray littered with dead bugs.

Matthew 12:42, **“One greater than Solomon is here.”** That would be Jesus. Jesus is the son of Solomon, but Jesus is greater than Solomon! Jesus was also surrounded by lucrative lights. But Jesus not only began strong, Jesus finished strong. And for Jesus it was tougher than nails. Because in addition to the nails, there was scourging, mocking, spitting, beating, slapping, sweating, bleeding, and crowning with thorns. Still, Jesus finished. In spite of his disciple’s kiss of betrayal. In spite of his friends running for cover. In spite of his countrymen clamoring for his death. In spite of his Father’s abandonment. Jesus finished.

On Good Friday, we see this scene. The sky is dark. The other two are moaning. There is Jesus, taking a deep breath and speaking these words. **“It is finished!”**. The veil torn. The blood poured. The curse removed. The sacrifice complete. Death defeated. Paradise restored. **“It is finished!”** Was this a cry of defeat? By no means! This is a cry of victory.

So today, just here, just now, lackluster finishers like you and me get no zap from “on high.” Instead, we receive the Father’s welcome, a Shepherd’s embrace, a Friend’s infinite love, a Savior’s forgiveness, a King’s attention, and a Lord’s grace. If the life of Solomon goes to show it’s easy as pie to begin, then the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus proves that though it was tougher than nails, he finished for us.

Hebrews 12:1-2 says, **“Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us run with endurance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart”**.

In this cloud of witnesses is Moses. Moses tended sheep for his father-in-law for 40 years, could hardly public speak, and lead people in the desert for 40 years, but he finished strong. Deuteronomy 34:7 says, **“Moses was 120 years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone.”**

Also in this cloud is Joshua surrounded by ten scared spies, and whose first job was a forty-year stint in the Sinai desert—but he finished strong. Joshua 24:15, **“Choose this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house we will serve the LORD.”**

And then these words for the ages. **“Five times I received from the Jews forty lashes minus one, three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea”** (2 Cor 11:24–25). But, Paul finished strong. 2 Timothy 4:7, **“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.”**

Don’t count out the other faithful Christians God has placed in our lives, whether that was a Grandparent, Mom, or Dad, persistent neighbor, loving friend, or caring sibling. Maybe it was a wise Sunday School teacher, or faithful pastor.

The entire cloud of witnesses demonstrates that in the fight between the stream and the rock the stream always wins. Not through strength, but through endurance; through faith in Christ.

Finishing strong doesn’t mean finishing first. It doesn’t mean finishing without blood, sweat, and tears. Finishing strong means daily fixing our eyes on the world’s only true Light, Jesus, the Son greater than Solomon. And here is what Jesus promises, **“He who began a good work in you, will finish it on the day of Christ Jesus”** (Phil 1:6). Amen.

NEW MEMBER INSTALLATION

Pastor: Dear Friends in Christ, on this day we have the joyful privilege of welcoming into our fellowship at Emmaus Lutheran Church these fellow saints in the body of Christ now present here before you. To those of you who are becoming members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, I would now ask you in the presence of God and this congregation:

Do you acknowledge and confess the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church to be the true and unaltered teachings of the Word of God? If so, answer, ***“I Do.”***

Do you desire in the sincere obedience of God, to be received into the communicant fellowship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and of Emmaus congregation? If so, answer, ***“I Do.”***

Do you intend to continue in the confession of this Church, to make diligent and faithful use of His Word and Sacrament, and to lead a sober, righteous and God-pleasing life, even unto the end? If so, answer, ***“I do so intend, with the help of God.”***

Do you desire to become a member of the family of Christ’s people at Emmaus, do you intend to join us in faithfully using His precious means of grace: His Word and Sacraments, and do you commit yourself to mission and ministry which He has given us to do in this place? If so, answer, ***“Yes, with the help of God.”***

Please join with the people of Emmaus in confessing our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed.

All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Pastor: In the Name of our Gracious God and on behalf of the people of Emmaus, I bid you welcome as members of Emmaus Lutheran Church and encourage you to faithfully continue with us in worshiping God, in hearing His Word and sharing His Supper, in proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ through word and deed, and in striving for justice and peace in all the earth. May the blessings of the Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest upon you and abide with you. Depart in peace, serving the Lord!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION "The Advent of Our King"

PREFACE

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.

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, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who entered human history to fulfill Your will and to become our Savior, forever changing our relationship to You and one another and bringing freedom and joy to this fallen world. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of pow'r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

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.

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace.

People: Amen.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; 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: 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” LSB 411

1 I want to walk as a child of the light.
I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world.
The star of my life is Jesus. Refrain

ref In Him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God.
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

2 I want to see the brightness of God.
I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path,
And show me the way to the Father. Refrain

3 I'm looking for the coming of Christ.
I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
We shall know the joy of Jesus. Refrain

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *1 Thessalonians 5:18* – “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” Christians express their thanks to God in many ways: in prayer, in giving to the Lord’s work, in acts of service to others, and in faithful living in their daily callings. Everything we do to honor God in our lives is a means of returning thanks for the Lord’s many gifts to us.

CHRISTMAS DECORATION DONATIONS: Sanctuary Christmas decoration donation slips are available in the narthex. Please indicate your willingness to help defray decoration costs by using the donation slip. Place in the offering plate or hand to an usher. Donation slips will be available through December 25.

ADVENT WORSHIP: Join us December 16. **Emmaus will host the 11:30 a.m. service, and Bethel will host the 7:00 p.m. service.** Pastors Kooi and Prin will be at both and will alternate preaching and doing the liturgy. It will be the same service at both congregations. We would love to have you join the service that works best for you and your family, whether that is in-person at Emmaus or Bethel, or virtually via YouTube.

CHRISTMAS DECORATING AND WORSHIP: Decorating the sanctuary for Christmas will be done by small groups over the week before December 20th. Realizing the uncertain situation with the pandemic, plans are currently in place to celebrate the festival of Christmas on Christmas Eve with one in-person worship opportunity at 5 p.m. and a virtual service sent out ahead of time.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays at 2:15 p.m. we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Each week, we will gather together to pray and study a text. We will be meeting in-person and virtually. For those that attend virtually, we will have you join us via Zoom (contact Pastor Kooi for the link). Please contact Pastor Kooi for more details.

HATS AND MITTENS: Starting December 14th the Social Ministries Committee will be collecting hats and mittens/gloves to be distributed to children and youth in Minnesota through the organization Hats and Mittens. New hats and gloves or mittens can be dropped off at Emmaus from December 14th – January 3rd. We have received a Thrivent Action Grant to help with this project. Thank you!

HOLIDAY TOY DRIVE: Your help is needed. The Twin Cities Salvation Army provides toys for thousands of children (ages 0-14) who may not otherwise receive a Christmas gift. Due to COVID-19 and the extreme job losses that many families are facing, it is likely that the need for Christmas assistance will be greater than ever before. We will be collecting new, unwrapped toys at Emmaus until Sunday, December 6th. Most needed are ethnic-specific toys like dolls and books representing African American, Native American, Hispanic, and Asian cultures. In addition, there is great need for general toys for the following children: Unisex, ages 0-2, Boys 6-9, Girls 10-14, and Boys 10-14. This Christmas season, the Twin Cities Salvation Army has partnered with Walmart to make donating toys even easier. Simply buy toys online from Walmart using this Web link: <https://bit.ly/3m90Bhf> and the gifts will be shipped directly to The Salvation Army's headquarters in Roseville. Purchased toys can also be dropped off at Emmaus. We have already received a Thrivent Action Grant to help start our collection efforts. Please contact Marie G with any questions.

HEAR "THE LUTHERAN HOUR" on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week's broadcast: "Experience God" Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. We will never fully grasp the idea of God, but that doesn't keep us from experiencing God's love for us in Christ. (John 1:1-18)