

# THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

March 7, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.

**PRELUDE** “Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow” *LSB* 428

“On My Heart Imprint Your Image” -setting by Ruth Mackie

*Words for meditation:*

*On my heart imprint Your image,*

*Blessèd Jesus, King of grace,*

*That life’s riches, cares, and pleasures*

*Never may Your work erase;*

*Let the clear inscription be:*

*Jesus, crucified for me,*

*Is my life, my hope’s foundation,*

*And my glory and salvation!* Text: Public domain

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**People: who made heaven and earth.**

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

**People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

**People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. 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. O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious to all who have gone astray from Your ways and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of Your Word; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

## FIRST READING *Exodus 20:1–17*

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. You shall have no other gods before me. 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 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. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 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. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. 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."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**EPISTLE** *1 Corinthians 1:18–31*

The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**HOLY GOSPEL** *John 2:13–25*

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

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

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

## APOSTLES' CREED

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.

## SERMON "Clutter"

Have you ever had a problem with clutter? We all have that place where "stuff" seems to collect...and stay. Maybe it is the first drawer by the front door, or that cabinet above the microwave. Perhaps the garage, shed, or basement is that place. As the old saying goes, "Out of sight, out of mind." A desk, table, or bed, can also be common landing places for clutter. We all have places where things gather and collect.

Clutter can create some challenges, and issues, though. Clutter can prevent the intended use of a space; there might be too much stuff gathering there that the place becomes unusable. Clutter can also distract. There might be so many things that can draw your attention or redirect your focus. It can also be unhelpful with so much stuff at one place, or even overwhelming to tackle. You might wonder, "Where do I put it? Where do I start?" and that can lead us to just leaving it where it is. Worst of all, though, clutter can prevent something important. If your bed, desk or table has too much stuff on it, you might not be able to rest, work, or eat a meal with your loved ones.

Clutter can do all of this. It can distract, prevent an intended use, and take away from something important. While we all can have clutter in our lives, we need to be aware of another type, too: spiritual clutter. We can have things, practices, and behaviors that can prevent us, hinder us, and distract us from receiving what is truly important, Jesus and the gifts that He gives, whether in worship, or in life.

In the spring of 2016, I remember a noticeable instance of this. I just received the call to be the pastor at Emmaus, and had a big to do list. I had to plan and prepare for a 560 mile move. I needed to find a home in a place and state that neither my wife or I had ever been to. We knew no one in St. Paul, let alone Minnesota. I still had to work and finish up my schooling, which included a 20 page term paper, other written assignments, a final 50% of my grade, and an hour long theological interview in which anything and everything was fair game. I also had to say goodbye to friends and people who I had grown close to in four years; others, I had known for over eight! I remember sitting in chapel one Wednesday, being utterly unable to focus. I tried to listen to the readings and sermon, but these things pulled my mind and attention in other directions. I struggled to hear and listen. I was there, but I wasn't *there*, if you know what I mean. I had so much "clutter" in my mind and life, that I struggled in receiving Jesus and the gifts that He gives.

What spiritual clutter do you have in your life? What prevents, distracts, or hinders you from receiving Jesus and the gifts that He gives? For some of us, COVID-19 has certainly created some clutter through mandates, regulations, and restrictions. If COVID hasn't cluttered your spiritual life, what else has? Is it anxiety over employment, or a rift with a friend? Is it questions about how much longer you can live on your own? Is it the shame and ghosts of past sins, or is it the siren song of temptation? Maybe, your priorities are all out of whack and order. What is at the bottom should be up top. As you come to the Divine Service and live your life, these things can occupy our attention and hearts, and clutter our lives. The result? We can lose focus of Jesus and He can seem so far away.

If you have ever experienced a sense of clutter in your spiritual life, our text from John is a real joy. Jesus enters the Jerusalem temple which is crowded and cluttered and "cleanses" it. Dare I say, He "declutters" it. The term might lack the religious language of cleansing, but it certainly captures the work that Jesus does. Our Lord enters our cluttered attempts at worship and life, and clears a way so that we experience the presence of God and receive His gifts.

John tells us that Jesus went up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, the chief festival of Judaism. As He enters the temple, He sees quite a scene. He finds a market established and conducted in the temple and her halls, and He witnesses all the sights and sounds that go with it. He sees and hears the haggling of buyers and sellers ("How about five dollars for that ox?") "No way, this is temple certified and the best of the bunch. Ten

dollars, and not a cent lower.” “Let’s meet in the middle at \$7.50” “Fine...deal.”). He hears the lowing of cattle and sees the huge pen that they occupy. He hears the baaing of sheep and sees some stray wool on the ground. He hears the cooing of pigeons and sees their cages stacked by the wall. He hears the clanking of coins and sees people getting overcharged as currency is exchanged, and the temple tax paid. The temple is unrecognizable. Its purpose is skewed. Distractions abound. It is...cluttered.

The thing with clutter is that it usually means and starts well. The people travelling to Jerusalem did need animals for sacrifice. It was impractical, if not *impossible*, for them to travel long distances with them. Have you ever traveled with an animal? It isn’t easy, nor, is it always fun. The animals that were provided were a needed thing. The money changers were, too. People needed to pay the temple tax and to have the correct coinage. The clutter meant well...but didn’t end well. It did what clutter often does.

These things distracted. How can you pray and worship when you hear the bleating of goats, the coos of pigeons, and the bartering of buyers and sellers? How can you pray and worship in the middle of a marketplace full of currency exchange counters and animal pens? You can’t. These things belonged outside of it. They did not belong in it.

These things also prevented the temple’s intended use: it was to be a place of prayer and worship. It wasn’t meant to be a marketplace and place of profit. These things also led the people away from what was important: the temple was the meeting place for God and man; It was where He gives His people His gifts and blessings. Instead, it had become a house of trade.

As Jesus looks at all of the clutter, He acts. Zeal for God’s house consumes Him. He makes a whip of cords, and John says, **“He drove them all out of the temple,”** Jesus gives it a thorough cleansing. He removes *all* the clutter. Anything that doesn’t belong there is removed. He removes the clutter so God’s people can worship, and so they can see, hear, and experience the most important thing: the wonder of a Father in Heaven Who offers them forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

As you can rightfully assume, John records the confrontation that ensues. **“So the Jews said to him, ‘What sign do you show us for doing these things?’”** With His response, He makes a profound point and truth. He points to the greater temple and sacrifice. He says, **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”** John tells us **“But He was speaking about the temple of His body.”** The body of Jesus is where God dwelt and was made manifest. The sacrifices that were done in the temple pointed forward to, and found their fulfillment in His once for all sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the world. Jesus came to declutter.

As we go through this season of Lent, what clutter does your life have? What distracts you from Him? What hinders your walk of faith? Know that Jesus continues His decluttering work *today*. On that spring Wednesday in 2016, I had a hard time focusing because of all that I had going on. But as I stepped forward for communion that day, I received what I truly needed. My Lord’s work and gifts came to me, and nothing was going to stop it. He continues His work today, but His tools are fortunately different. They aren’t a whip, but they are something else.

Jesus uses bread and wine that deliver His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Through His Supper, He strengthens us and our faith. He gives us life and salvation. He gives us peace, a right relationship with God, and dismisses us in joy. He works and declutters through water and the Word, baptism. There, our sinful nature is daily put to death, and the new man daily emerges to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. We live in the grace given to us there, along with our identity as God’s beloved and forgiven children.

Jesus uses His Word to equip, encourage, restore, guide, and teach us. He works through His Spirit to renew our heart, lives, and minds, and to make us more like Him. What is more is that Jesus comes to dwell among us in grace, providing forgiveness for the penitent, life to the dying, strength to the weak, hope for the hopeless, and rescue for the powerless. He has come to remove our clutter.

In these days of COVID, it is easy to become distracted. It is easy to be exhausted with regulations. It is easy to be frustrated by all the clutter in our lives. However, Jesus promises to be here, clearing it away, so we know God’s desire: to be with us, to bless us with His gifts, and to receive us at His table.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

## **MUSIC DURING PREPARATION “Jesus, I Will Ponder Now” -Johann Walther**

*Words for meditation: LSB 440 st. 1*

*Jesus, I will ponder now*

*On Your holy passion;*

*With Your Spirit me endow*

*For such meditation.*

*Grant that I in love and faith*

*May the image cherish*

*Of Your suff’ring, pain, and death*

*That I may not perish. Text: Public domain*

## **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 demonstrated His mercy and grace to sinners. While we were still weak, He died for the ungodly; while we were still sinners, He died for us.

Through Your love in Christ beyond compare, prepare our hearts, minds, hands, and lips to celebrate this Meal and receive Your body and Your blood given and shed for us in sincerity and truth. 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 Sabaoth adored;**

**Heav’n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.**

**Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;**

**Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

## **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

## **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.**

## 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."

## 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.*

**MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION** "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" -accompaniment by Janet Linker; Austin Lovelace

*Words for meditation: LSB 427*

*1. In the cross of Christ I glory,*

*Tow'ring 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. Text: Public domain*

## POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

## BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## 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** “My Song Is Love Unknown” *LSB* 430

1. My Savior’s love to me,  
Love to the loveless shown  
That they might lovely be.  
Oh, who am I  
That for my sake  
My Lord should take  
Frail flesh and die?

2. He came from His blest throne  
Salvation to bestow;  
But men made strange, and none  
The longed-for Christ would know.  
But, oh, my friend,  
My friend indeed,  
Who at my need  
His life did spend!

3. Sometimes they strew His way  
And His sweet praises sing;  
Resounding all the day  
Hosannas to their King.  
Then “Crucify!”  
Is all their breath,  
And for His death  
They thirst and cry.

4. Why, what hath my Lord done?  
What makes this rage and spite?  
He made the lame to run,  
He gave the blind their sight.  
Sweet injuries!  
Yet they at these  
Themselves displease  
And ’gainst Him rise.

5. They rise and needs will have  
My dear Lord made away;  
A murderer they save,  
The Prince of Life they slay.  
Yet cheerful He  
To suffering goes  
That He His foes  
From thence might free.

6. In life no house, no home  
My Lord on earth might have;  
In death no friendly tomb  
But what a stranger gave.  
What may I say?  
Heav'n was His home  
But mine the tomb  
Wherein He lay.

7. Here might I stay and sing,  
No story so divine!  
Never was love, dear King,  
Never was grief like Thine.  
This is my friend,  
In whose sweet praise  
I all my days  
Could gladly spend! Text: Public domain

### **Acknowledgments**

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.  
Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2018 Concordia Publishing House.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GENEROSITY THOUGHTS:** *John 2:16 – “And he told those who sold the pigeons, ‘Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade.’”* The Lord's House is not a place to sell, but a place to receive and a place to give. It's not a place for our schemes and plans. Instead the Church is a place for the Lord's gracious giving and our faithful sacrifices in response.

**LENTEN MIDWEEK WORSHIP** will be held at Emmaus on Wednesdays through March 24 at 11:30 a.m. There will be an evening service at Bethel Lutheran Church at 7 p.m. Maundy Thursday (April 1) and Good Friday (April 2) will have the same schedule.

**EASTER MEMORIAL GARDEN:** Look for the Easter Memorial Garden donation slips in next Sunday's bulletin giving you the opportunity to contribute in memory of departed loved ones.

**SEWING NEEDED:** The movable dividers that have been used at Emmaus for many years are in need of an update. We have purchased fabric with a Thrivent Action Grant and need a few people to help with sewing the new fabric into panels. If you have the time and ability to help with a couple of panels, please contact Marilyn P. or Molly V.

**PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY:** Wednesdays we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Please check with Pastor Kooi for the current start time. 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.

**REGISTER FOR CONCORDIA ACADEMY CAMPS:** This summer, Concordia Academy offers over 30 sports, arts, and STEM summer camps for elementary, middle, and high school students. New offerings include Cardboard Creations, Coding, Stop Motion Animation, and Sweet Treats & Healthy Eats! Go to [www.concordiaacademy.com/camps](http://www.concordiaacademy.com/camps) to get details and register.



**HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR”** on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “Widow's Mite” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. Why did Jesus commend a poor widow who gave all her money to a corrupt institution that oppressed widows? Dr. Michael Zeigler takes a deeper look. (Mark 12: 13-34)