

Service for Sunday, February 28, 2021
 Provided on Elim's website, Facebook, and Zoom

Second Sunday of Lent

Prelude

Lamb of God

Paris/Hayes
 pub. by Straightway Music

Announcement

Please join us for our streamed Midweek Lenten service on
 Wednesday, March 3, at 6:30.

Please stay for Annual Meeting immediately after worship. We will hold the meeting in the sanctuary with masks and social distancing. Zoom will also be available for those who don't wish to attend in person. On Zoom, there will be an option for voting and asking questions.

Greeting

The grace and peace of the Lord, our God, who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Gathering Hymn

Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said

Text: Charles W. Everest

Music: W. Hauser

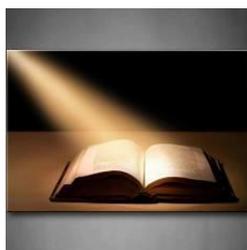
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Take up your cross, the Savior said,
 if you would my disciple be;
 forsake the past, and come this day
 and humbly follow after me.

Take up your cross; let not its weight
 pervade your soul with vain alarm;
 his strength shall bear your spirit up,
 sustain your heart, and nerve your arm.

Take up your cross, nor heed the shame,
 nor let your foolish heart rebel:
 for you the Lord endured the cross,
 to save your soul from death and hell.

Take up your cross and follow Christ,
 nor think till death to lay it down,
 for those who humbly bear the cross
 one day will wear the glorious crown.



The Word

The Old Testament reading for today is from the 17th Chapter of Genesis.

¹When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, “I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. ²And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.” ³Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ⁴“As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁵No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. ⁶I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. ⁷I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.”

¹⁵God said to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. ¹⁶I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.” (Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16)

This is the Old Testament reading.

Today’s Psalm is from the 22nd Chapter of the Book of Psalms.

- ²³You who fear the LORD, give praise! All you of Jacob's line, give glory.
Stand in awe of the LORD, all you offspring of Israel.
- ²⁴For the LORD does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither is the LORD's face hidden from them;
but when they cry out, the LORD hears them.
- ²⁵From you comes my praise in the great assembly;
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.
- ²⁶The poor shall eat and be satisfied,
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!
- ²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;
all the families of nations shall bow before God.
- ²⁸For dominion belongs to the LORD,
who rules over the nations.
- ²⁹Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;
all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.
- ³⁰Their descendants shall serve the LORD,
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.
- ³¹They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,
saying to them, "The LORD has acted!" (Psalm 22:23-31)

This is the Psalm.

The New Testament reading is from Romans, the 8th Chapter.

¹³The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations")—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. ¹⁸Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." ¹⁹He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. ²⁰No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, ²¹being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. ²²Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as

righteousness.”²³ Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone,²⁴ but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,²⁵ who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification. (Romans 4:13-25)

Here ends the New Testament lesson.

The Gospel for today is from the 8th Chapter of Mark. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

³¹[Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life?³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:31-38)

Word of God. Word of life. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Message

There are two of many passages in the Bible which seem to confuse people. In the passage from Matthew 11:30, Jesus tells us this; “For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” In other words, there is nothing too difficult for Jesus to handle. He takes care of all our burdens and woes. And then there are these words Jesus says in

today's Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8. Jesus speaks these words to the crowd that is with his disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." This short statement is an entirely different matter for Jesus, and in fact, for us. In Matthew, the "for my yoke" words are quite reassuring. Here Jesus promises he will be with people no matter their challenges. You know – the stuff like a bad job, or a harping mother-in-law, or a bad grade on a test. But this text from today's Gospel is an entirely different matter.

In order to better understand exactly what this means, let's take a step back to the Old Testament and the story of Abraham and Sarah. In the short version, these two were desperate for a child. Abraham particularly wanted a son, but in their old age, this wish seemed virtually impossible. However, God gave them a son and promised that Abraham would be the father of all generations, of all peoples of all times and places. So their son, Isaac, began the fulfillment of the promise God made to Abraham and Sarah.

God's promises are never taken back, like you might hear a child say, "If you don't do what I wanna do, then you can't have the toy, book, whatever I'm playing with." God's promises are not revoked because we don't do what God says. When God makes a promise, a testament, a covenant with us, it is 100%, undeniably certain!

The next step to understanding Jesus' words in the Gospel brings us to these words; "take up your cross and follow."

There is nothing in these words about the comfort of Jesus taking all our troubles upon himself. So what does this statement mean? Let's take a look...

In the time prior to Jesus' birth well into the Third and Fourth centuries of the Current Age, the cross was not a symbol of comfort. The cross was terrifying because this was a symbol of the common practice of persecution, torture, punishment, and death. Therefore, it was quite different for the very early Christians than it is for us. The cross, to us, is the symbol of death but also the representation of the removal of our sins. Sometimes it's on pieces of art or it's beautiful jewelry. Not so for these early Christian ancestors. We should truly be able to understand why the cross was horrible for these people of God.

When Jesus used the example of the cross, his meaning, which the people would understand, was this: when you follow Jesus, the way is not easy. The road can be dangerous and the way long. The final "taking up your cross business" is that we are to suffer death before we receive our eternal, blessed inheritance. In other words, "the wage of sin is death." But God's amazing gift to us is the promise of no more tears, no more sorrow, no more grief, and no more sadness. Is it any wonder why this is a common text for funerals?

Maybe we can now look at the cross in a new way. Can we see the suffering of life in the cross? Can we see the end of life? There is promise which will not be taken in the Gospel. It's no wonder Jesus tells us – "If any want to become my followers, let

them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

Amen. Yes, it shall be so. Amen.



Sermon Hymn

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

Text: Sigismund von Birken

Music: Georg G. —————oltze

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Let us ever walk with Jesus,
 Follow His example pure,
 Through a world that would deceive us
 And to sin our spirits lure.
 Onward in the footsteps treading,
 Travelers here, our home above,
 Full of faith and hope and love,
 Let us do our Savior's bidding.
 Faithful Lord, with me abide;
 I shall follow where you guide.

Let us suffer here with Jesus,
 And with patience bear our cross;
 Joy will follow all our sadness,

Where he is there is no loss.
 Though today we sow no laughter,
 We shall reap celestial joy;
 All discomforts that annoy
 Shall but prove to mirth here after.
 Jesus, here I share your woe;
 Help me there your joy to know!

Let us gladly die with Jesus.
 Since by death he conquered death,
 He will free us from destruction,
 Gives to us immortal breath.
 Let us mortify all passion,
 That would lead us into sin;
 And the grave that shuts us in
 Shall but prove the gate to heaven.
 Jesus, here with you I die,
 There to live with you on high.

Let us also live with Jesus;
 He has risen from the dead,
 That to life we may awaken.
 Jesus, you are now our Head,
 We are your own living members;
 Where you live, there we shall be.
 In your presence constantly,
 Living there with you forever.
 Jesus, let me faithful be,
 Life eternal grant to me.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
 the Father, the almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the only Son of God,
 eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God,
 Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made;
 of one being with the Father;
 through him all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven;
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
 and became truly human.
 For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.
 On the third day he rose again in

 accordance with the Scriptures;
 He ascended to heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again with glory
 to judge the living and the dead.
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord, the giver of life.
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
 who had spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
 We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
 We look for the resurrection of the dead,
 And the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Your gift of grace is for all people. Give confident faith to all the baptized, that they may follow you wholeheartedly. Give new believers joy in your promises; give hope and courage to those who suffer for their faith. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

All the ends of the earth worship you. From galaxies to microorganisms, preserve your creation. Teach humanity to wonder at your works and to join you in tending to creation's well-being. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Grant to this country and all places in this world where there are divides, bridges to cross differences between peoples. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In Jesus you joined humanity in suffering and death. Reveal to all the depth of your love shown on the cross. Accompany all who suffer in body, mind, and spirit. Restore all who are sick or grieving especially Karen Lind's sister, Liz Anderson – Ron Anderson's sister-in-law, Clifford Berkhus - LaVonne Black's cousin, Gayle Lee – friend of Connie Rawls, Tom Phillips - family of Scott and Pastor Carol Strand, Marilyn Dolezal, Jeanne Roen, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer's sister, Rose – Lenora Scheer's niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, Oall who are suffereing with COVID, and those we name in our hearts before you; Bring vindication for victims of injustice, exploitation, and oppression. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You made Abraham and Sarah the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Bless grandparents, parents, and foster parents, and the children who look to them for care and guidance. Console those who deal with infertility, parents who have entrusted their children to adoption, and children longing to be adopted. Equip ministries and services to families. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You gave us your church to serve others in this world. Create in us the ability to hold meetings that are successful and respectful of one another. Give everyone who wants to speak the words to share for the benefit of your glory. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

As we have been gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray together the pray we have been taught.

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. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

Sending Hymn

Day by Day

Text: Carolina Sandell Berg

Music: Oskar Andfelt

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Day by day, your mercies, Lord, attend me,
 bringing comfort to my anxious soul.
 Day by day, the blessings, Lord, you send me
 draw me nearer to my heav'nly goal.
 Love divine, beyond all mortal measure,
 brings to naught the burdens of my quest;
 Savior, lead me to the home I treasure,
 where at last I'll find eternal rest.

Day by day, I know you will provide me
 strength to serve and wisdom to obey;
 I will seek your loving will to guide me
 o'er the paths I struggle day by day.
 I will fear no evil of the morrow,
 I will trust in your enduring grace.
 Savior, help me bear life's pain and sorrow
 till in glory I behold your face.

Oh, what joy to know that you are near me
 when my burdens grow too great to bear;
 oh, what joy to know that you will hear me

when I come, O Lord, to you in prayer.
Day by day, no matter what betide me.
You will hold me ever in your hand.
Savior, with your presence here to guide me.
I will reach at last the promised land.

Sending

Blessing

You are what God made you to be:
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
chosen as holy and beloved,
freed to serve your neighbor.
God bless you ✝ that you may be a blessing,
in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity.
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Day by Day

Mark Hayes
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