

This downloadable resource from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician, designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Lent in preparation for the Easter celebration. Concordia Publishing House also offers coordinated Daily Devotion booklets and standard size bulletin covers that may be used to enrich the worship of those congregations using this series. More information about coordinated products may be found at cph.org/lent. This preview document contains excerpted portions of the major components for Midweek of Lent 1.

FOR US

[The Series Introduction is also available in Additional Resources and can be used in your congregational newsletter.]

“For us” is not simply a pithy line to use because it is easy to repeat. It is a confession of who God is and what He brings in giving us His Son. It helps us understand *why* God would send His Son to die for us.

The phrase “for us” also captures much of the Reformation’s theological emphasis—and Luther’s understanding of Scripture in particular. Luther went from searching for a righteous God and finding only stern rebuke to seeing God in the form of a little baby and as the one who became one of us *for us* so that we might become like Him.

Our Lenten preaching series hymn “O Love, How Deep” (*LSB* 544) was originally a twentythree-stanza poem written in the fifteenth century by an unknown author. In the nineteenth century, an Anglican cleric named Benjamin Webb translated the hymn into English and then chose six stanzas for use in English hymnody. The doxological stanza was added later.

Some hymns tell a story, others teach, and still others create pictures in our minds of the great works of God. Some hymns do all three, weaving together a tapestry that is beautiful yet simple, wondrous yet easy to understand. “O Love, How Deep” is that kind of hymn.

Although it does not appear in the first stanza, the most pointed and beautiful language in the hymn is expressed in the phrase “for us.” The phrase is reminiscent of the language of the Nicene Creed: “Who *for us* men and for our salvation came down from heaven.”

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

YOU NEEDED TO BE THERE

FOCUS: PHILIPPIANS 2:6–9

VISUAL: A COLLECTION OF TRAVEL PICTURES, EITHER FROM YOUR OWN TRAVELS OR SIMPLY PHOTOS OF NATIONAL PARKS

SUMMARY: DESCRIBE THE BEAUTY OF A NATIONAL PARK LIKE YELLOWSTONE. STRESS THAT YOU REALLY NEED TO GO THERE TO UNDERSTAND HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS. JESUS CAME TO LIVE WITH US, WHICH MEANS HE TRULY KNOWS WHAT LIFE IS LIKE FOR US.

MESSAGE

Start by showing a number of travel pictures to the children. These can be pictures from your own trips or pictures of national parks that are striking, such as Yellowstone or Rocky Mountain National Park.

Aren't these great pictures? When I was there with my family, we couldn't get over how beautiful it was. The mountains are so high, and the colors are so bright. No picture takes it all in. The pictures on our phones are nothing compared to these mountains. You really have to be there to understand how wonderful the park is.... [Full message available with purchase]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

THE ROBE OF HUMAN FRAME

Overview

Text: Hebrews 1

Sermon Theme: Jesus is better than an angel because He is one of us.

Sermon Goal: That the hearer would come to understand why Jesus is not an angel; His becoming man was part of His great work for our salvation.

Series Lectionary:

Hebrews 1

Mark 14:12–31

SERMON NOTES

LITURGICAL SETTING

This sermon takes place on the Wednesday after the First Sunday in Lent. The Holy Gospel for the First Sunday in Lent records Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. There is some mention of angels in Jesus' temptation and how they minister to Him after He has suffered at the hands of the tempter.

TEXTUAL AND EXEGETICAL NOTES¹

HEBREWS 1:1–4

This amazing introduction to the book of Hebrews is reminiscent of the prologue of Luke's Gospel. Masterfully, the author confesses that Christ the Son, as the exact imprint of the Father, the Word made flesh, who purified our sins, is seated at the right hand of majesty and has inherited a greater name than angels because He is better than angels. It summarizes the theology of Hebrews in a nutshell yet will take a lifetime to unpack. As John Kleinig puts it in his commentary,

¹ This section and the following sermons based on texts from Hebrews will primarily utilize the following volume from the Concordia Commentary series: John W. Kleinig, *Hebrews*, Concordia Commentary (Concordia Publishing House, 2017).

Scholars rightly praise this beautifully crafted single sentence as a masterpiece of spoken Greek. It employs a pleasing mix of euphony and alliteration, rhythm and cadence, balance and contrast, varied word order and significant emphasis. It is lovely to speak and even more lovely to hear!²

HEBREWS 1:5

This is a contrary-to-fact conditional statement. To which of the angels did God ever say this?

Answer: None.

HEBREWS 1:6–7

These verses, quoting the Psalms, highlight how the angels are servants who are under the authority of God and worship God.

HEBREWS 1:14

This is a rhetorical question. Are they not? Yes, they are ministering spirits (λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα) sent out to serve the inheritors of salvation.³ While Hebrews goes on to explain what this inheritance is (6:9; 9:15), our purpose here is to observe that angels are servants who were created in order to serve God’s good creation, particularly those who will inherit salvation.

SERMON ILLUSTRATION

There is no lack of contemporary thought on angels. It may be helpful to use an illustration that demonstrates how having something that is *similar* does not always help. A parent understanding the pain of their child because they, too, suffer pain may be a good example.

HYMN CONTEXT

This sermon utilizes the second stanza of the series hymn:

2. He sent no angel to our race,
Of higher or of lower place,
But wore the robe of human frame,
And to this world Himself He came.

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction: The multiplication of angels in popular media.

I. How angels and demons appear in the Bible.

II. Why God had to become man.

III. He does not “get us,” but He is us.

² Kleinig, *Hebrews*, 50.

³ For more on the angels as “liturgizing spirits,” see Kleinig, *Hebrews*, 85.

SERMON

Today/tonight, we will continue looking at the ancient hymn “*O Love, How Deep*” and how to rightly understand the ministry of angels among God’s people.

Angels are a source of endless fascination and speculation in our world. Our hymn for this season was written in the fifteenth century, almost six hundred years ago. It was a time when it was somehow easier to believe beings like angels and demons exist. But even now, we like to believe that there are spiritual beings whose sole purpose is to serve God and to take care of us.

We first see angels appear in the Bible in Genesis 3. God places an angel with a flaming sword at the entrance to the Garden of Eden. Angels appear as messengers, warriors, guardians, and worshipers and attendants at the throne of God. These biblical angels are not cute and cuddly. They are mighty beings who have been present at every significant event in the life of God’s people throughout history... [Full sermon available with purchase]

LEADER GUIDE

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

ONLY IF YOU'RE THERE

Philippians 2:5–8

OPENING

Dear Jesus, we remember today that You chose to live among us, taking on a servant's role. You came without wealth or power but chose to be seen as a carpenter. You built Your life with this goal: to serve rather than to be served. Help us understand the richness of Your service and the outcome of Your obedient death. In Your death, the world's debt was paid. In Your resurrection, the hope of the world was renewed. We pray in Your name. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus came to be as we are and to serve in ways we cannot. He didn't stand aloof from our suffering. But by His incarnation, He stepped forward to bear our sin and to pay the debt we owed. He did this all while He was also true God, the only Son of God from eternity. He served in obedience to His Father's will, even to taking the cross. But as He is true God and true man, His death brought all the weight of His divinity to bear. He was not a single man unjustly killed, but He was the Father's only Son. So His death was worth the world to His Father.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1 What is something you wanted to do as a child but discovered you were too young or too little to do? When you finally grew up enough, was the experience all that you had hoped for?

A1 Expect a wide range of fulfillment and disappointment. Perhaps driving a car was as exciting as someone had hoped. On the other hand, living in that first apartment was not the dream that had been imagined. Lead the discussion to any present plans students might have—going on a cruise, retirement, moving to a different home. How confident can we be about the outcome of these plans? That leads to the offer to have the very mind of Christ, as described in Philippians 2:5–8.

Q2 Read Philippians 2:5–8. In verse 5, what is Paul's amazing offer concerning the mind of Christ and us? If someone were to say that we could have the mind of God, how likely would that seem to be?

A2 Expect that the offer to have the mind of Christ will seem completely out of our grasp. In fact, it might appear to be presumptuous and even dangerous. It seems to carry echoes of the first temptation, when the serpent promised Eve that she could be like God and would know good and evil (Genesis 3:1–7). Nothing good came from seeking that knowledge and the status of being like God. So whether out of spiritual caution or simple humility, we might step back from the command to have the mind of God.

Q3 Despite our cautions about the command to have the mind of Christ, to what degree can we think and act as Christ did? See especially Philippians 2:1–4 for this answer.

A3 The context of Philippians 2:1–4 points us outside of ourselves so that we are focused on others. The mind of Christ is not a pompous filling of our own minds or a temptation to imagine we are God. We share the mind of Christ by simply listening to the needs of others. We are in tune with His mind when we seek the cares of others rather than the fulfillment of our wishes. We reflect God when we care for others as He has already cared for us. God hears our prayers, even if our stories and needs are so small compared to the needs of the whole world. Yet God hears us patiently. Sharing the mind of Christ brings us to listen and care about the lives of others, as God has done for us.

... [Full Bible study available with purchase]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

THE ROBE OF HUMAN FRAME

AS WE GATHER

Why did Jesus have to come among us as a human being? Why didn't He come as an angel or some other kind of being that is stronger and more powerful than us? While angels may be a source of endless fascination to the Christian and to the world, they have no power to save us. In this week's sermon, we will hear why taking on the "robe of [our] human frame" was not only a good idea but also necessary for our salvation. Angels are wonderful, but they are not Jesus. He came as one of us so that He could redeem us as His own.

HYMN

"From God the Father, Virgin-Born" (*LSB* 401)

[OR]

HYMN

"O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild" (*LSB* 546)

INVOCATION

□ In the name of the Father and of the □ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

|| **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Matthew 16:24; Isaiah 53:5, alt.

□ Return to the LORD, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,

|| **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and He relents over disaster.**

□ Jesus said, "If anyone would come after Me,

|| **let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."**

□ Christ was wounded for our transgressions;

|| **He was crushed for our iniquities.**

HYMN

"On My Heart Imprint Your Image" (*LSB* 422)

PSALM

Psalm 104:1–10, 33–35

□ Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great!

|| **You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering Yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent.**

□ He lays the beams of His chambers on the waters;

|| **He makes the clouds His chariot; He rides on the wings of the wind;**

□ He makes His messengers winds, His ministers a flaming fire.

|| **He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved.**

□ You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains.

- || **At Your rebuke they fled; at the sound of Your thunder they took to flight.**
- The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that You appointed for them.
- || **You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.**
- You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills;
- || **I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.**
- May my meditation be pleasing to Him, for I rejoice in the LORD.
- || **Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more!**
- Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!
- || **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.**

[OR]

PSALM

Psalm 91:9–13, 15–16

- Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—
the Most High, who is my refuge—
- || **no evil shall be allowed to befall you, no plague come near your tent.**
- For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.
- || **On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.**
- You will tread on the lion and the adder;
- || **the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.**
- When he calls to Me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him.
- || **With long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.**

**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.**

READING

Micah 5:2–5a

- A reading from the fifth chapter of Micah.
- ²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for Me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.
- ³Therefore He shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of His brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.
- ⁴And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great
to the ends of the earth.

^{5a}And He shall be their peace.

□ O Lord, have mercy on us.

▮ **Thanks be to God.**

[OR]

□ A reading from the fifth chapter of Micah.

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for Me
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And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD,
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▮ **Thanks be to God...**[Full customizable creative service available with purchase]

MIDWEEK OF LENT 1

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OPENING SENTENCES

LSB, p. 229

- O Lord, open my lips,
- || **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

- Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
- || **make haste to help me, O Lord.**

- || **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. Praise to You, O Christ, Lamb of our salvation.**

+ PSALMODY +

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