

Rethinking Religion



RETHINKING THE WORTH OF WORSHIP

Third Sunday in Lent

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

March 3, 2024

SERIES THEME: RETHINKING RELIGION

Everyone has assumptions about God. Likewise, everyone has assumptions about religion. Increasingly, those assumptions are negative. Americans are walking away from Christianity in breathtaking numbers. It raises the question. How do those people know if their assumptions about religion are correct? Do they really understand Christianity at all? Do we? Do we truly understand this religion? In the season of Lent, as much as any other, Jesus teaches things that turns the world's assumptions about religion completely upside down. We call it "Christianity." So, in this holy season, let us go straight to Christ and let him replace assumptions with truth. Jesus, help us to rethink religion!

THEME OF THE DAY: RETHINKING THE WORTH OF WORSHIP

Person A never attends worship. He can't see the point. Person B attends every week out of a slavish sense of obligation. Her mind wanders during the services, for she views the activities of worship merely as tasks for her to complete. Who is worse off? Rather than debating the point, let us just admit neither understand the true worth of worship. And that is exactly what Satan wants. Many think worship is about what we do for God. It is the other way around. As we gather around Word and sacrament, the Spirit moves us to love and trust in God above all things. Moved by the cross of Christ, we bow down before our God. We commune with him. And that's exactly what God wants.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Timothy Richert

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 912 Open, Lovely Doors

Stand

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

Amen.

Confession

CW 155

Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Almighty and merciful Father,

we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.

We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.

We have done those things that we should not have done,

and we have not done those things that we should have done.

Have mercy on us, Lord!

Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,

according to your promises in Christ Jesus.

Silence for meditation and reflection

God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

CW 213

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord; be merciful and answer me.

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Grant us, Lord, the spirit to think and do what is right that we, who cannot do anything that is good without you, may by your help be enabled to live according to your will; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Exodus 20:1–17

The Ten Commandments teach us that God is to be worshiped above all because He is the God who brought us out of slavery.

The Ten Commandments

¹ Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the Lord your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, where you were slaves.

³ You shall have no other gods beside me. ⁴ You shall not make any carved image for yourself or a likeness of anything in heaven above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow down to them or be subservient to them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God. I follow up on the guilt of the fathers with their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren, if they also hate me. ⁶ But I show mercy to thousands who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not permit anyone who misuses his name to escape unpunished.

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day by setting it apart as holy. ⁹ Six days you are to serve and do all your regular work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day shall be a sabbath rest to the Lord your God. Do not do any regular work, neither you, nor your sons or daughters, nor your male or female servants, nor your cattle, nor the alien who is residing inside your gates, ¹¹ for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. In this way the Lord blessed the seventh day and made it holy.

¹² Honor your father and your mother so that you may spend many days on the land that the Lord your God is giving to you.

¹³ You shall not commit murder.

¹⁴ You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ You shall not steal.

¹⁶ You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

¹⁷ You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 19-In Front of Hymnal: The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:18–25

Whatever it is you trust most, that is what you truly worship. May we worship Christ for what he did on the cross.

Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. ¹⁹ In fact, it is written:

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will bring to nothing.

²⁰ Where is the wise man? Where is the expert in the Jewish law? Where is the probing thinker of the present age? Has God not shown that the wisdom of this world is foolish? ²¹ Indeed, since the world through its wisdom did not know God, God in his wisdom decided to save those who believe, through the foolishness of the preached message. ²² Yes, Jews ask for signs, Greeks desire wisdom, ²³ but we preach Christ crucified—which is offensive to Jews and foolishness to Greeks, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ We preach Christ crucified, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

John 2:17



Refrain



Tone



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Gospel

John 2:13–22

Jesus restored his Father’s house to what it was supposed to be: a place of worship for all people.

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

¹³ The Jewish Passover was near, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

¹⁴ In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and money changers sitting at tables. ¹⁵ He made a whip of cords and drove everyone out of the temple courts, along with the sheep and oxen. He scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶ To those selling doves he said, “Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father’s house into a place of business!”

¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

¹⁸ So the Jews responded, “What sign are you going to show us to prove you can do these things?”

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.”

²⁰ The Jews said, “It took forty-six years to build this temple! And you are going to raise it in three days?” ²¹ But Jesus was speaking about the temple of his body. ²² When Jesus was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this. Then they believed the Scripture and what Jesus had said.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 558 Salvation unto Us Has Come

sts. 1–4, 9

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there 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.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 637 The Law of God Is Good and Wise

sts. 5–6

Lord's Prayer

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.

Blessed Lord, you have given us your Holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 407 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

Sunday: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

Wednesday 3/6: 6:30 PM Midweek Lent Worship Service

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