

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church
Arvada, Colorado***

Sunday Family Devotion in Absence

***Fifth Sunday in Lent
March 29, 2020
The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH)***

OPENING HYMN TLH 178 “We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died”

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

INTROIT Psalm 43:1-2a, 3-5

Vindicate me, O God,

and defend my cause against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me!

For you are the God in whom I take refuge.

Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!

Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy,

and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Vindicate me, O God,

and defend my cause against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me!

For you are the God in whom I take refuge.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT Genesis 22:1-14

¹ After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.”

² He said, “Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.” ³ So

Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the

place of which God had told him. ⁴ On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the

place from afar. ⁵ Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey; I and the

boy will go over there and worship and come again to you.” ⁶ And Abraham took the wood of the

burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. ⁷ And Isaac said to his father Abraham, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” He said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” ⁸ Abraham said, “God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son.” So they went both of them together. ⁹ When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. ¹¹ But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” ¹² He said, “Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.” ¹³ And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ So Abraham called the name of that place, “The LORD will provide”; as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.” (ESV)

GRADUAL *Psalm 18:48a, c; 143:9a, 10a*

Deliver me from my enemies, O LORD!

Teach me to do your will, for you are my God!

You delivered me from my enemies;

you rescued me from the man of violence.

EPISTLE *Hebrews 9:11-15*

¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) ¹² he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

¹⁵ Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. (ESV)

HOLY GOSPEL *John 8:42-59*

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God.” ⁴⁸ The Jews answered him, “Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?” ⁴⁹ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. ⁵⁰ Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge. ⁵¹ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” ⁵² The Jews said to him, “Now we know

that you have a demon! Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.’⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you make yourself out to be?”⁵⁴ Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’⁵⁵ But you have not known him. I know him. If I were to say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and I keep his word.⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.”⁵⁷ So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?”⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”⁵⁹ So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. (ESV)

SERMON HYMN TLH 40 “The God of Abraham Praise”

SERMON

Last week’s sermon talked about God testing his people in order to bless them. This week the same theme of testing and blessing is seen in the Old Testament reading and the verses around it.

Abraham had fathered Isaac as an old man with his aged wife Sarah. God had previously promised Abraham that through his son Isaac his Seed, his offspring, would be reckoned. So, Abraham was well aware that Isaac would father other descendants for Abraham’s lineage. But when God tested Abraham, it was a severe test with an unimaginable demand. God told Abraham to take his only beloved son, Isaac, to a specific place – a mountain in the region of Moriah – and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering. Abraham had longed for a son with his wife Sarah throughout his entire adult life, even taking matters into their own hands by Sarah giving her servant through whom Abraham could have a son, and now in her old age Sarah had miraculously conceived and given birth to a son with Abraham. At 100 years old, Abraham finally had what he had wished for all of his life, his son Isaac. Then God told him to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. Isaac his son, his only son whom he loved, was going to die at the command of God.

Now that’s a test! We are all being tested by God with our current situation in the world, our state, our city, our church, and our families. But none of us ever has been or ever will be tested like Abraham was. Someone always has it worse than we do, and we can give thanks to God for not giving us more than we can bear. And we must always remember as God’s children, that our Father tests us in order to bless us.

Early the next morning, Abraham got everything ready and left together with Isaac for the place God told him about. On the third day, he arrived at his destination. Can you imagine? For three days, Abraham had to think about what he was going to do. For three days, Isaac was as good as dead. Still the text indicates that Abraham had figured out what was going to happen. He told the servants who had traveled with them, “Stay here with the donkey while the boy and I go over there. We will worship and then *we* will come back to you.” Abraham was not being deceptive, he believed that Isaac would return with him alive. So, Abraham built an altar, arranged the wood, tied up Isaac and placed him on the wood on the altar. Then he took the knife in his hand to kill his son, his only son, whom he loved. But with mere seconds to spare, the Angel of the LORD, the pre-incarnate Christ himself, called out from heaven “Abraham! Abraham!” and stopped him from killing his son, Isaac. Then the Lord provided a ram for Abraham to offer as a burnt offering instead of his son Isaac. Abraham had passed the test!

Then, God blessed him after the test was over. The verses just following the Old Testament reading for today says that the Angel of the LORD, Christ, called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said to him, “I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely *bless you* and make your offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens and as the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your Seed all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.” Abraham had the most severe test; and Abraham was most severely blessed. It is the same for us too; the greater our testing, the greater our blessing.

So, what was Abraham thinking during those three days? Actually, Hebrews 11 tells us exactly what he was thinking. It says, “By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was going to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had told him, ‘It is through Isaac that your Seed will be reckoned.’ *Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead*, and figuratively, he did receive Isaac back from death.” That is what Abraham had determined. He believed the promises of God concerning Isaac, and he trusted that God would raise him from the dead.

Still, there is something deeper going on here. The sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham is a type of the sacrifice of Christ. The offering of Isaac points to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ on the cross to pay for the sins of the world. Christ is the Son, the only Son, whom his heavenly Father loves in the eternal love of the Holy Spirit. Christ was dead – truly physically dead – for three days as he lay in the tomb. On the third day, Christ was raised – not figuratively like Isaac – but in reality and truth in his body to give resurrection life to all who believe in him, even now by faith and hereafter in our own bodies. Christ is the promised Seed of Abraham, the incarnated Son of God who blesses all people with the Gospel of his salvation. Christ blesses his people by making us sons of God in Holy Baptism. Christ blesses us by forgiving us of our sins in Holy Absolution. Christ blesses us as we eat his Body and drink his Blood in Holy Communion. Christ blesses us after our time of testing and suffering; and he will bless us for all eternity in the presence of the Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit in the realms of heavenly glory. Amen!

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN TLH 156 “Not All the Blood of Beasts”

COLLECT FOR THE WORD

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast 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.

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.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.

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

The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN TLH 144 “Jesus, Grant that Balm and Healing”

The liturgy is from *Lutheran Service Book* Copyright ©2006 and *Lutheran Service Book: Altar Book* ©2006 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission. License #14215.