



### Introduction

*The second covenant in this year's Lenten readings is the one made with Abraham and Sarah: God's promise to make them the ancestors of many, with whom God will remain in everlasting covenant. Paul says this promise comes to all who share Abraham's faith in the God who brings life into being where there was no life. We receive this baptismal promise of resurrection life in faith. Sarah and Abraham receive new names as a sign of the covenant, and we too get new identities in baptism, as we put on Christ.*

### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.**

God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Fountain of living water, **pour out your mercy over us.**  
**Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free.**  
**Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn.**  
**Wash us in your cleansing flood.**  
**Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus,**  
**as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.**

Beloved, God's word never fails.  
The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are ✚ forgiven, and God remembers them no more.  
Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

## Prayer of the Day

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

*As with Noah, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abraham and Sarah. God promises this old couple that they will be the ancestors of nations, though they have no child together. God will miraculously bring forth new life from Sarah's womb. The name changes emphasize the firmness of God's promise.*

*Read the text [here](#).*

## Psalmody: Psalm 22:22-31

<sup>23</sup>You 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.

<sup>24</sup>**For 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.**

<sup>25</sup>From you comes my praise in the great assembly;  
I will perform my vows in the sight of those who fear the LORD.

<sup>26</sup>**The poor shall eat and be satisfied,  
Let those who seek the LORD give praise! May your hearts live forever!**

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
all the families of nations shall bow before God.

<sup>28</sup>**For dominion belongs to the LORD, who rules over the nations.**

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, 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.

<sup>30</sup>**Their descendants shall serve the LORD,  
whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.**

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God's deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying to them, "The LORD has acted!"

## **Gospel: Mark 8:31-38**

*After Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time what is to come. Peter's response indicates that he does not yet understand the way of the cross that Jesus will travel.*

*Read the text [here](#).*

## **Reflection on the Text**

Could you imagine what it felt like to Peter and be told, "Get behind me, Satan!" We all know that Peter can be excitable in his actions and conversations with others, but that does sound a little harsh. Just before this, Peter had declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior, and now Jesus is rebuking Peter.

It is okay to feel sorry for Peter, but we are not much better at times. We miss Jesus' point as well. Peter might have been dreaming or thinking of a leader that would restore the nation of Israel to its former glory, a messiah that would remove foreign leadership and restore an independent government and religious leader.

We can all understand how strength and power can be attractive. That a powerful Jesus would come in with an army of some kind and change the world, with Jesus sitting on a throne in Jerusalem. It would be a system of comfort and security for some.

And here is Jesus talking about dying a gruesome death on the cross. Even at the time that the Gospel of Mark was written in the 70's AD, everyone in the Roman world knew about crosses. This punishment was embarrassing, painful, and would bring shame to you and your family. It was a penalty used against criminals or people who threatened Rome's political power. It was not something to brag about.

Yet here is Jesus describing that he will suffer, be rejected by the powers that be, and die on a cross. On top of that, Jesus even tells that if we follow him, we must be ready to risk loss of security, to risk suffering, to risk death. This is not what Peter, or us if we had been there, wanted to hear. The messiah was supposed to be glorious and dominant. Peter expected Jesus' followers to share that glory, not to follow the Messiah to the cross. Why would Jesus allow all of this to happen? Out of love and obedience to God and love for us. Jesus loved us until his death, and afterwards.

Then there is the question - what is Jesus trying to get across? Well, if you notice Jesus' ministry focuses on getting to the know the people, healing the people, loving the people, and bringing them back to God. If you remember the Gospel readings from over the years, who did Jesus talk to and heal? People from all walks of life. Tax collectors, thieves, those considered spiritually unclean, and the lepers. People who were ostracized by mainstream society. Yet Jesus also talked, helped, and loved those in leadership like Nicodemus and the centurion. A part of Jesus' mission is to bring God's love and grace to the world. All the world, not just parts of it.

That is what we are being called into. To love God and one another. To follow Jesus into caring for each other. Will that save us? Nope. God saves us, not our actions. Then why the actions? God has expectations for those who follow Jesus. Love and serve God and one another.

In chapter 9 of Mark's gospel, a couple of the disciples argue over a place of importance. Instead, Jesus invites them to drink out of his cup. To be a servant. To take care of each other. They were like Peter in today's passage, thinking of glory in human terms. That is the reason for Jesus' rebuke. To help Peter to move away from human ideas of glory and power. Jesus wants Peter to try to understand and follow Jesus' ministry given by God to save the world. Which will include Jesus' death.

Some folks may wonder, "What is this suffering that we must endure?" "Does it include death?" For Peter, James, and Stephen, it did mean physical pain and death. It did mean punishment from oppressive authorities. There are parts of the world today, where Christianity is banned, and people will be imprisoned or put to death if they proclaim the gospel. For most of us in the US, the suffering would be more of being ridiculed for our faith. The suffering may be being honest and not getting promoted at work, because we would not lie or steal.

So why would any of us even want to follow Jesus if it could cause pain or death? Go back to verse 31 and read the last five words. It says, "after three days rise again." Jesus is apparently aware that God the Father will resurrect him. Then Jesus' mission will be complete. Reconciling the people back to God. Shaping the world to think of serving God and those in need. Not putting themselves before others or God. Jesus saves the day and the world. Yes, there are promises of comfort, peace, ease of mind, no more pain.

But there is the offer, yes offer, of God's love to each of us. To love us here and now. Not just in the future after we die or when we do something good. God through Jesus' death and resurrection, along with the activity of the Holy Spirit, meets us here and now. No matter whether we are here at worship, shopping at a grocery store, or laughing with someone over the phone. God love us and wants us to love God back.

There might be moments where we are like Peter and get confused. We may be corrected by God like Peter was. But if you know the gospel story, Peter is loved and wanted by God. God offers all of this to us as well. And guess what? We get to hear more about God's love for us in the next few weeks. Join us as the love story continues... Amen

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 325 / WOV # 660    *I Want Jesus to Walk with Me***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## **Apostles' Creed**

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

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. 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. Bring vindication for victims of injustice, exploitation, and oppression (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You made Abraham and Sarah the ancestors of a multitude of nations. Bless parents, grandparents, 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.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

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.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # 324/ LBW # 104**

***In the Cross of Christ I Glory***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

Worship adapted from sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS027356.

Today's reflection was written by Pastor Mike Lang.