

Sunday February 28, 2021 ~ 2nd Sunday in Lent



St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Lebanon, Oregon
Celebrant, Rev. AJ Buckley

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins.
People : *His mercy endures for ever.*

The Decalogue is said, the people standing or kneeling.
The response is *Amen. Lord have mercy.*

Hear the commandments of God to his people:

I am the Lord your God who brought you out of bondage.
You shall have no other gods but me.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

Honor your father and your mother.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit murder.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not commit adultery.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not steal.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not be a false witness.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.
Amen. Lord have mercy.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *1 John 1:8,9*

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Minister and People

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. ***Amen.***

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy

The Collect

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

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

When 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. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I 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.

God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I 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."

- Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People
- Thanks be to God

Psalm 22:22-30

22 Praise the Lord, you that fear him; *
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel; all you of Jacob's line, give
glory.

23 For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither does he
hide his face from them; *
but when they cry to him he hears them.

24 My praise is of him in the great assembly; *
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.

25 The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the Lord shall praise
him: *
"May your heart live for ever!"

26 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, *
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

27 For kingship belongs to the Lord; *
he rules over the nations.

28 To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; *
all who go down to the dust fall before him.

29 My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; *
they shall be known as the Lord's for ever.

30 They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn *
the saving deeds that he has done.

Second Lesson –Romans 4:13-25

For the 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. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For 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, as 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. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He 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. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith “was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Now the words, “it was reckoned to him,” were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

- Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s People
- *Thanks be to God*

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark 8:31-38

- *Glory to you, Lord Christ*

Jesus began to teach his disciples 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. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 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.”

He 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. 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. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 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.”

- This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- *Praise to you, Lord Christ*

Sermon

“The Easy Way Out”

The Rev. AJ Buckley

For as long as I can remember, I’ve been fascinated by magic. I remember getting a whole starter’s magician kit one Christmas and showing off my tricks to any unsuspecting adult I could corner for a few minutes. I watched magicians in awe and wonder, and even aspired to become one, especially a great one like Houdini. I was completely enamored of the way magic could alter our worlds. My love of magic didn’t end with simple sleight-of-hand, it

continued into the world of fantasy and sci-fi books--of Lord of the Rings, of Eragon, Shadowhunters, The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe, Harry Potter and so forth. It also encompasses tv shows and movies and comics. And even the natural world.

I was blessed with a wild and creative imagination and the ability to simply contemplate. I still love magic. I still see the world as full of wonder and magic.

But I've also learned that magic always comes with a cost. I've learned that part of what I love about magic and the temptation that magic holds for all users of magic is taking the easy way out.

It seems like that's what's happening in our lessons today, especially the Gospel reading. Jesus announces the suffering he'll have to endure and Peter, earnest and empathetic, is concerned for Jesus and tempts him to take the easy way out. We are not privy to how the conversation goes between them but I imagine it to be akin to "um but you're the Messiah, you don't have to do this...can't you just snap your fingers or whatever and avoid this?"

In a similar vein, it can seem like Abraham and Sarah got it good, but that's only if we erase their first 99 years of life up to this point--the ostracising, sticking with Sarai even as she bore no children by him, Sarai being barren and ashamed. They suffered greatly. God did not come to them as a young freshly married couple and offer them this covenant. They did not get the easy way out. They got the long, painful, heartbreaking way.

This is Jesus saying to Peter "don't tempt me to do it that way." Jesus is rebuking the temptation he feels. He has the power to call down the armies of heaven and lay waste to every Roman. He's God after all. But he knows that that's not the right way. And yet, he is still tempted in every way to go the easy route. To rebuke the temptation to do the easy and very very reasonable thing shows us Jesus' faithfulness, fidelity, and loyalty to His Father and ours.

After showing us his vulnerability, his tempted-ness, Jesus reminds us that the way of victory isn't the way of weapons, power, wealth, violence, greed or self-sufficiency.

The way of victory is the way of self-sacrifice, of self-emptying.

God wins when we give ourselves up.

And that has to be my..our goal.

God's victory not my/our own.

My victory can be attained through violent/greedy/selfish means but at a price far greater than my own life.

It costs me my community, my integrity, and slams the doors on the very kingdom of God.

I get it. The easy way is tempting. Suffering sucks even when it's for a good cause. Now

more than ever, after a year of sacrifice, and still over 500,000 dead from the pandemic...we get what it means to suffer. We have given up so much for the good of others--gathering, and hugging our loved ones, and vacations planned and canceled, and I know we're all tired of it and worn down. Pain hurts in a very real way. To be honest there are days when I tire from the struggle of living in poverty, of the isolation of this pandemic. When I sure would like a magic fix.

These days I must confess that I would love an easy and uncomplicated fix to poverty, hunger, violence, racism, climate devastation and extinction.. and, most of all, this pandemic. It breaks my heart open. But, when I get my head out of where it doesn't belong, and remember that I am not walking this road alone--that we all share the burden--that we're in this together-- it gets a little easier to bear what can feel like an overwhelming burden.

We must resist the temptation to avoid and shield ourselves from our own pain and suffering and that of the world. We must also resist the temptation to go all super hero and try to do it on our own. We are to carry our cross. not everyone else's too.

Sit with the pain, with the heartache, with the suffering.

Let it break you wide open.

Then, you can hear God's call and take part in creating God's Kingdom here on Earth. And, when tempted to go the easy way out--have a friend nearby whom you trust who can speak the truth in love and remind you of our common call to follow Jesus. ***Amen.***

Nicene Creed

(BCP p.358)

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:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

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 into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in 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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has 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 for Lent II, year B

The response is: Lord graciously hear us.

As we prepare for the paschal feast, let us offer intercessions to God who gave up his Son for us.

For this holy gathering, for all Christians enduring persecution and tested by suffering, and for all the holy people of God.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For this parish of St. Martin's, that we may be faithful to our mission and respond to the spiritual needs of those around us with compassion, joy, and truth.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, Diana our Bishop, for all clergy, deacons, and ministers and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For the descendants of Abraham and Sarah, for all who share God's covenant, and for all the peoples of the earth.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For all who are oppressed, afflicted, or in despair, especially those on our prayer list and those we name now, silently or aloud.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who rest in the peace of Christ, and for all the departed, especially especially Miguel Alba, Socco Fierro, Delores Mouradian, Rev. Jerry Jefferies; Mike Huycke; for all who have died from Covid, and for all whose names are known to God. May light perpetual shine upon them.

- Lord, hear us.
- *People* Lord, graciously hear us.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

Celebrant

Blessed are you, God of our fathers: You sent your Son to suffer greatly and after three days rise from the dead. Receive the prayers we offer this day and enable us to take up our cross and follow Jesus Christ. Glory to you for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer *said not sung*

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,
 for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer for St. Martin's *said in unison*

God of Love, open our eyes and ears
 to perceive you at work
 in creation, the church, and our parish.

Fill our hearts with your love
that we may reach out in love to others.
Stir up our imagination with your Holy Spirit
that we may find new ways to live into life with you.
Give us a vision of your mission
that we may share your love and your spirit
in all the places where we work and play and worship you.
In Jesus' holy name, ***Amen.***

Prayer for Peace

BCP p. 815

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. ***Amen.***

Seasonal Blessings

Dismissal

- Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.
- *Thanks be to God,*