

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

Saved by the Foolishness of God

March 7, 2021

When the Israelites were encamped by Mount Sinai, just out of slavery in Egypt and far from the Promised Land, God wisely gave them the Ten Commandments. They are engraved in our historic churches and capitol buildings. Their perfect demands require a Savior for us. Jesus was so jealous for God's Law that He cleansed the temple before cleansing us of our sin by giving the temple of His body. In His wisdom, God did what we could not: He kept His own Law for us and then chose us to be the Body of Christ today. None of us has kept the commandments; we and our spiritual ancestors reflect our weaknesses in faith and action. But in the process, God's wisdom shows forth: When we are weak, He is strong. Today is a day to boast about God's grace and His Son, Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God.

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN: [*Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun*](#)

INVOCATION

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: Today's Psalm, Psalm 19, informs our preparation for worship this morning. First, it celebrates the glory of God's creation.

PSALM *Psalm 19:1-6*

Pastor: The heavens declare the glory of God,

People: and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

Pastor: Day to day pours out speech,

People: and night to night reveals knowledge.

Pastor: There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.

**People: Their measuring line goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.**

Pastor: In them He has set a tent for the sun,

People: **which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.**

Pastor: Its rising is from the end of the heavens,
and its circuit to the end of them,

People: **and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

Pastor: Continuing Psalm 19, the psalmist considers God's perfect Law.

PSALM *Psalm 19:7–11*

Pastor: The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;

People: **the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;**

Pastor: the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

People: **the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;**

Pastor: the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

People: **the just decrees of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether.**

Pastor: More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;

People: **sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.**

Pastor: Moreover, by them is Your servant warned;

People: **in keeping them there is great reward.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *(from Psalm 19:12–14)*

Pastor: When we use the Ten Commandments and other parts of the moral code
as a mirror, we see that we have fallen from the perfection of God's good
creation and His perfect Law.

Who can discern his errors?

People: **Declare me innocent from hidden faults.**

Pastor: Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins;

People: **let them not have dominion over me!**

Pastor: Our gracious Lord has promised full and free forgiveness to all who call
out to our heavenly Father in His name. Let us therefore confess our sins
to God, our heavenly Father.

People: **O God, we confess that we have sinned against You and one another
in our thinking, speaking, and acting. Worse, in our fallen nature, we
are sinful and unclean, and in the eyes of many we are weak, lowly
people. But because You have graciously chosen us and worked faith**

in our hearts, we humbly ask for mercy for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Forgive, renew, and lead us in paths of righteousness.

Pastor: The foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. We preach Christ crucified, and for us the word of the cross is the power of God. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. Thanks be to God.

Pastor: Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

People: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

+ SERVICE OF THE WORD +

KYRIE

Pastor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace of God's whole creation, for the well-being of all whom He has chosen to preach Christ crucified, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their thanks for the blessings that flow from the cross of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

O God, who in wisdom created us, though we would become weak and rebellious creatures, knowing that Your Son's sacrifice of Himself on the cross would be necessary to save us, keep us strong in faith, so that we preach only Christ crucified and boast only in Your strong love and mercy

toward us, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING – *Exodus 20:1–17*
(*The Ten Commandments*)

¹And God spoke all these words, saying,

²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³"You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

⁸"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹²"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³"You shall not murder.

¹⁴"You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵"You shall not steal.

¹⁶"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL (*from Hebrews 12:2*)

**O come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus,
the founder and perfecter of our faith,
who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame,
and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

EPISTLE – *1 Corinthians 1:18–31*
(*The foolish wisdom of God*)

¹⁸The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

²⁰Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. ²²For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. ³¹Therefore, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE (*from John 2:19*)

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

HOLY GOSPEL – *John 2:13–25*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the second chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹³The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. ¹⁴In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-

changers sitting there. ¹⁵And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. ¹⁶And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." ¹⁷His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

¹⁸So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?" ¹⁹Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" ²¹But he was speaking about the temple of his body. ²²When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

²³Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. ²⁴But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people ²⁵and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN OF THE DAY: [*In the Cross of Christ I Glory*](#)

SERMON – *Saved by the Foolishness of God*

NICENE CREED

People: **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 OF THE CHURCH

After each petition:

Pastor: ... Lord, in Your mercy:

People: hear our prayer.

At conclusion:

Pastor: ... of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *(from Matthew 6:9–13)*

**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 PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.
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; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION *(from Numbers 6:24–26)*

Pastor: May God almighty—the Father who created all that exists; the Son, by whose death we have life; and the Holy Spirit, who has worked faith in our hearts that we may boast only in the Lord—bless you and keep you, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

HYMN: [How Firm a Foundation](#)

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**