

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

March 14, 2021

Jesus Is Lifted Up on the Cross so that We May Look to Him and Live

The people sinned by speaking *"against God and against Moses,"* and the Lord called them to repentance by sending fiery serpents, which *"bit the people, so that many people of Israel died"* (Num. 21:4–6). When the people confessed their sin, the Lord provided a means of rescue from death. He instructed Moses to *"make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole,"* so that *"if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live"* (Num. 21:8–9). Thus, God sent His Son into the world, in the likeness of our sin and death, and lifted Him up on the pole of the cross, that whoever looks to Him in faith *"may have eternal life"* (John 3:14–16). By His cross, *"the light has come into the world,"* not for condemnation, but *"that the world might be saved through him"* (John 3:17–19). While we *"were dead in the trespasses and sins"* in which we once lived (Eph. 2:1), God loved us, calling us to repentance and raising us up with Christ to live *"with him in the heavenly places"* (Eph. 2:4–6).

OPENING HYMN: [*Lift High the Cross*](#)

INVOCATION

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

People: **Amen.**

INTRODUCTION

Pastor: Today is the "lightest" Sunday in Lent, once called Laetare, for the old Introit that began "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem." Our Readings call us to look up to Christ on the cross and rejoice, for by grace He leads us from death to life.

OPENING SENTENCES *Numbers 21:9; Ephesians 2:4–5; John 3:16*

Pastor: Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone,

People: **he would look at the bronze serpent and live.**

Pastor: But God, . . . even when we were dead in our trespasses,

People: **made us alive together with Christ.**

Pastor: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,

People: that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

PSALM *Psalm 107:1–9; antiphon: v. 19*

Pastor: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,

People: and He delivered them from their distress.

Pastor: Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,

People: for His steadfast love endures forever!

Pastor: Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,

People: whom He has redeemed from trouble
and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.

Pastor: Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to a city to dwell in;
hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

People: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and He delivered them from their distress.

Pastor: He led them by a straight way
till they reached a city to dwell in.

People: Let them thank the LORD for His steadfast love,
for His wondrous works to the children of men!

Pastor: For He satisfies the longing soul,
and the hungry soul He fills with good things.

People: Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and He delivered them from their distress.

+ WORD +

INTROIT *Psalm 27:3–5; antiphon: v. 1*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;

though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

**that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze
upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.**

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

KYRIE

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who saved us while we were still sinners,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, once lifted upon the tree of the cross,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

People: have mercy on us and grant us Your peace. Amen.

SALUTATION and PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; 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 - Numbers 21:4-9

(Israelites who look up to the bronze serpent live.)

⁴From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. ⁵And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." ⁶Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we

have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." ⁹So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL *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 - *Ephesians 2:1–10*

(We are saved by grace.)

¹And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ²in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. ⁴But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE - *John 3:16*

People: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

HOLY GOSPEL - John 3:14–21

(All who look up to Jesus on the cross will be saved.)

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁴[Jesus said:] "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY: [*Amazing Grace*](#)

SERMON

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence 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.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

After each petition:

Pastor: ... Lord, in Your mercy:

People: hear our prayer.

At conclusion:

Pastor: ... Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER *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.

Lord Jesus, while we were still dead in sin, You came as one of us to die for us and bring us to eternal life. Give us strength of faith to look up to You each day of our sojourn until we see You face-to-face in eternity; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

People: Amen.

DISMISSAL *Ephesians 2:10*

Pastor: You are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which
 God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Therefore, go in
 peace as you serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

CLOSING HYMN: *God Loved the World So That He Gave*

- 1 God loved the world so that He gave
 His only Son the lost to save,
 That all who would in Him believe
 Should everlasting life receive.
- 2 Christ Jesus is the ground of faith,
 Who was made flesh and suffered death;
 All then who trust in Him alone
 Are built on this chief cornerstone.
- 3 God would not have the sinner die;
 His Son with saving grace is nigh;
 His Spirit in the Word declares
 How we in Christ are heaven’s heirs.
- 4 Be of good cheer, for God’s own Son
 Forgives all sins which you have done;
 And, justified by Jesus’ blood,
 Your Baptism grants the highest good.
- 5 If you are sick, if death is near,
 This truth your troubled heart can cheer:
 Christ Jesus saves your soul from death;
 That is the firmest ground of faith.
- 6 Glory to God the Father, Son,
 And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
 To You, O blessèd Trinity,
 Be praise now and eternally!

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