

## Sermon followed by Service

April 3, 2022

1 Timothy 1

“God, I thank you that I believe in creation, that you created the world in six days. God, I thank you that I believe in the power of baptism, and your gift of forgiveness and peace in the Lord’s Supper. God, I thank you for your wonderful plan for sex and gender, and for your gifts of life and marriage. God, I thank you that I believe your Word to be true. God, I thank you!”

Yes, thank God, and treasure his Truth and Teaching. Treasure them, not because they are “your truth” or “mom’s truth” or “dad’s truth.” Treasure them, not because they are “Lutheran truth.” Treasure them because they are God’s truth.

I’ll say it again: thank God, and treasure his Truth and Teaching. Treasure them not just because they are right. Treasure them because they are pieces of the wonderful puzzle God has designed, the wonderful puzzle God is putting together, the wonderful puzzle that sets you right for life with God for time and for eternity.

I’ll say it yet again: thank God, and treasure his Truth and Teaching. Treasure them, not with the heart of the Pharisee, proud of self - “God, I thank you that I’m not like those other people ....” Treasure them with the heart of Isaiah who saw God and shuddered: **“Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”**

Treasure them with the heart of the tax collector. He didn’t have his eyes on anybody else and how they were wrong. No, he saw his own wrong and his desperate need for mercy - **“God, have mercy on me a sinner.”**

Treasure them with the heart of John Newton. You know John; he wrote “Amazing Grace.” But first, he was a slave in Africa, then a slave trader of Africans, a captain of slave ships, and then an investor in the slave trade. As God’s amazing grace impressed itself more and more on Newton’s heart, the more he grew opposed to slavery. But that’s another story; the reason I mention John Newton is for this story. One night he and a friend were walking the streets of London. They passed by drunks and drug addicts, poor and homeless. Newton’s companion had some grace-less things to say about them. Newton knew grace: “There but for the grace of God go I.”

“There but for the grace of God go I.” I sometimes wonder something like this: what if I were born in North Chicago instead of Michigan? What if I were the son of a presbyterian pastor instead of Lutheran pastor? What if I would have gone to Northwestern University and the Methodist seminary there instead of Northwestern College and our seminary in Mequon? Would I know any of this [Bible]? Would I believe any of this [Bible]? But before all time, God knew me and God knew you, and thinking of Jesus, he chose me and he chose you to be his. Now, in time, God worked history to put us in the right place at the right time with the right people in our lives, so that we know this and we believe this. I can’t claim any credit; it’s not my good thinking that had me born and surrounded with Jesus. I’ll say it again: I can’t claim any credit; it’s not my smarts that has me believing what God says. I can’t claim any credit; so we treasure God’s truth with humble thanks: “there but for the grace of God go I.”

And so we treasure God’s truth with the heart of Paul. **“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.”** You may know what Paul had in his history. There was a time he rejected Christ and his Church, a time Paul hunted down Christians to have them persecuted, arrested, even killed. Paul was out to crush Christ’s church. We might not have that same history, but how many times, how many ways have we rejected Jesus - even

when we knew better? How many times, how many ways, have we done something, said something ... that hurt, maybe even crushed, somebody in their walk with Jesus? How far back in our history would God have to go to have us begging: **“God, have mercy on me a sinner”**?

In his grace, God showed Paul, and he shows us, the grace he has for us in Jesus. In Jesus, we don't have a God prosecuting us, looking to show us our sin and guilt, and condemn us for our crimes against God and each other. No, in Jesus, we have a God pointing us to Jesus and the cross. There in Jesus, there on the cross, all your sins against God, all your sins against each other - all of them are covered, canceled, paid for, and forgiven. With Jesus, we can echo Paul and confess: **“Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst.”** Paul couldn't stop there. He goes on: **“But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.”**

Paul just gushes - doesn't he? - about forgiveness and the mercy and grace of God in Jesus. But Paul doesn't stop there, does he? Because he treasured God's forgiveness and mercy and grace in Jesus, what else did Paul treasure? He treasured the whole truth of God's Word. He treasured the whole truth with a determination to know it better and better. He treasured the whole truth with a determination to share it more and more. And he treasured God's truth - God's whole truth - with a determination to protect it from false teachers.

When Hymenaeus and Alexander left the faith for false teaching, Paul excommunicated them, handed them over to Satan. When others taught false doctrine, you heard how Paul gave Timothy clear directions to “command” them to stop.

Why? Look what false teaching does. With their false teachings, Hymenaeus and Alexander shipwrecked, smashed, sunk their own faith. And the other false teachers were on their way to do much the same. And worse. They were distracting the church with made-up meaningless talk, distracting the church from Jesus and the faith that saves.

So why was Paul so determined to protect the church from false teaching? What was his goal? Not to exercise control, but to show love. Not to protect turf, but to protect the glory of God's truth, the truth that gives faith and life. And - get this - Paul's goal wasn't just to silence false teachers with their false teaching, but to win them back to the truth.

That could take us back to last week's sermon - "**Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**" It could take us back two weeks - Jesus hurting for those who wouldn't listen to him. But mostly it takes us back to grace - the grace that God is showing and sharing with us, the grace that God gives us to show and share with others. So treasure God's grace, and treasure God's Truth. Amen.

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
*A Family Connecting in Christ*

April 2 & 3, 2022

**THE SERVICE**

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...

OPENING HYMN

*"Father, God of Grace You Knew Us"*

**Hymn 566**

Father, God of grace, you knew us, chose us, named us as your own,  
through eternal ages planning to redeem us in your Son.  
Praise the Father, God who loved us ere creation was begun!

We, your creatures, sinned against you, and our guilt was crimson red.  
Son of God, you came incarnate, crushed the crafty serpent's head,  
died our death, now live triumphant: praise the firstborn from the dead!

Counselor, you bring as promised from the Father and the Son  
righteousness fulfilled, accomplished, free forgiveness, heaven won.  
Praise the Spirit! He assures us our salvation's work is done!

Lord, your changeless Word has fed us, spanning time, transcending space.  
Water, bread, and wine sustained us when the darkness hid your face.  
Keep us with you, faithful Shepherd, by your saving means of grace!

Forward lead us; Christ, we follow, drawn by Word and promise true:  
"To all nations preach the gospel; I am evermore with you."  
Keep us faithful! Then, Lord Jesus, quickly come; make all things new!

## INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the  $\Upsilon$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just  
and will forgive us our sins  
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

**Holy God, gracious Father,**

**I am sinful by nature**

**and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

**I have not loved you with my whole heart;**

**I have not loved others as I should.**

**I deserve your punishment both now and forever.**

**But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins**

**with his innocent suffering and death.**

**Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the  $\Upsilon$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

**LORD, HAVE MERCY**

CW p. 174

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Amen.**

**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST**

CW p.176

*Refrain:* Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. *Refrain*

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. *Refrain*

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen. Amen. *Refrain*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift of grace that we come into your presence and offer true and faithful service. Grant that our worship on earth may always be pleasing to you, and in the life to come give us the fulfillment of what you have promised; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## FIRST READING

**Isaiah 6:1–8**

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

“Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.”

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

CHOIR

*"The First Song of Isaiah"*

Hymn 810

**Refrain**

*Surely, it is God who saves me; I will trust in him and not be afraid.*

*For the Lord is my strong-hold and my sure defense, And he will be my Savior.*

*Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing From the springs of salvation.*

*And on that day you shall say, "Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name."*

**Refrain**

*Make his deeds known among the peoples; see that they remember that his name is exalted.*

*Sing the praises of the Lord for he has done great things and this is known in all the world.*

**Refrain**

*Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,*

*For the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.*

**Refrain**

SECOND READING

**1 Timothy 1**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith.

Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**1 Timothy 1:15**

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

**GOSPEL**

**Luke 18:9–14**

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*“Not unto Us”*

**Hymn 582**

Not unto us, not unto us be glory, Lord;  
not unto us but to your name be praise;  
not unto us but to your name all honor be giv’n  
for matchless mercy, forgiveness, and grace.

Amazing grace—that chose us ere the worlds were made;  
amazing grace—that sent your Son to save;  
amazing grace—that robed us in your righteousness  
and taught our lips to sing glory and praise.

O faithful love—that shepherded through faithless years;  
forgiving love—that led us to your truth;  
unyielding love—that would not let us turn from you  
but sent us forth to speak pardon and peace.

Not unto us but to your name be glory, Lord,  
for grace so rich, so wide, so high, so free.  
Abide with us till trav'ling days are over and done,  
and pilgrim feet lead us home, Lord, to you.

## SERMON

### NICENE CREED

**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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. 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, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

## LITANY

*Brief intercessory prayers may be added at the end of the litany.*

In peace let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy."

For the holy Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love and be found without fault at the day of your coming, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the president of our synod, for the president of our district, for all pastors and teachers, and for all the holy people of God, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who fear God and believe in you, Lord Christ, that our divisions may cease and that all may be one as you and the Father are one, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who do not yet believe and for those who have lost their faith, that they may receive the light of the gospel, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the world, that a spirit of respect and forbearance may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those in positions of public trust, that they may serve justice and promote the dignity and freedom of every person, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all who are in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this congregation, for those who are present, and for those who are absent, that we may be delivered from hardness of heart and show forth your glory in all we do, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our enemies and those who wish us harm and for all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For ourselves, for the forgiveness of our sins, and for the grace of the Holy Spirit to amend our lives, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all who have asked that we pray for them: for our families, friends, and neighbors; that being freed from anxiety, they may live in joy, peace, and health, we pray to you, Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

[For... *here name the person and the cause of the petition*, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.]**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and all our lives to Christ our God.

**Amen.**

### THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Individually packaged wafers are gluten-free.)

### PREFACE

*CW p.183*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who brought the gift of salvation to all people by his death on the tree of the cross so that the devil, who overcame us by a tree, would in turn by a tree be overcome. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

*CW p.184*

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest!

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**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.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my  $\text{T}$  blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

## **JESUS, LAMB OF GOD**

*CW p.186*

Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.  
Jesus, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us your peace.

## **DISTRIBUTION**

### **PRAYER**

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
**his mercy endures forever.**

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

We give you thanks, O Lord, for the foretaste of the heavenly banquet you have given us in this Sacrament. Through this gift you have fed our faith, nourished our hope, and strengthened our love. By your Spirit, help us to live as your holy people until that day when you will receive us as your guests at the wedding supper of the Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

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

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.

**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

*“Amazing Grace”*

**Hymn 576**

Amazing grace—how sweet the sound—that saved a wretch like me!

I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.

The Lord has promised good to me, his Word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come;  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,  
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

## OFFERING

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