

Worship for Weekend of March 22, 2020

In Our World Today ... we may feel cooped up, fearful and frustrated, troubled and stressed. When we're feeling that way, it's easy for relationships - with God, with our self, with each other - to suffer.

In Our Worship Today ... we find the cure - not necessarily for COVID-19 - for our fear-filled frustrated, troubled, and stressed relationships - with Jesus, we are the people of God, chosen, holy, and dearly loved!

ALL: This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Confession and Absolution

Today we use one of the tools and treasures in Christian Worship, found on page 154 and also printed out for you here.

M: In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden.
Amen.

Minister and Penitent:

**O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy,
and in your faithfulness, come to my relief.
Do not bring your servant into judgment,
for no one living is righteous before you.
Answer me quickly, O Lord; my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me, for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.
Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.**

Penitent:

**Almighty God, merciful Father,
I, a troubled and repentant sinner,
confess that I have sinned against you
in my thoughts, my words, and my actions.
I have not loved you with my whole heart.
I have not loved others as I should.
I am distressed by the sins that trouble me
and am deeply sorry for them.**

Here the penitent may confess specific sins.

Minister:

Jesus says to his people, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven."
His death paid for the guilt of your sins and the sins of the whole world.
Do you believe this?

Penitent:

Yes, I believe.

Minister:

Because of the promise of our Savior Jesus, I forgive you all your sins.
Be assured that you are a dear child of God and an heir of eternal life.

Minister and Penitent:

**O Lord, my God, I called to you for help, and you answered me.
I thank you for the love you have shown me in Jesus Christ, my Savior.
Through him you have rescued me from the guilt of my sin
and given me the peace of forgiveness.
Help me fight against temptation,
correct whatever wrongs I can,
and serve you
and those around me
with love and good works.
In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.**

Hymn - *Christian Worship* 493

**"Forgive our sins as we forgive," You taught us, Lord, to pray,
But you alone can grant us grace To live the words we say.**

**How can your pardon reach and bless The unforgiving heart
That broods on wrongs and will not let Old bitterness depart?**

**In blazing light your cross reveals The truth we dimly knew:
What trivial debts are owed to us; How great our debts to you!**

**Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls And bid resentment cease;
Then, bound to all in bonds of love Our lives will spread your peace.**

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, You rule over all things visible and invisible, and you show yourself as our Father in Jesus. We live in a world where so many are fearful and frustrated, troubled and stressed. It is easy to be just as fearful and frustrated, just as troubled and stressed. By your Word and Spirit, rule in our hearts with the peace and love of Jesus so that we can show and share your peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson

Philippians 4:4-20 (select)

Paul wrote these words while cooped up as prisoner.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. ...

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Psalm 103 (*Christian Worship* page 105)

Second Lesson

Colossians 3:12-17

Paul also wrote these words as he was cooped up as a prisoner.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Gospel Lesson

Mark 1:40-42

I was talking with someone cooped up in quarantine; she said she felt like a leper.

A man with leprosy came to him [Jesus] and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

Apostles Creed

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

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From there 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.**

Hymn - Christian Worship 490

Love in Christ is strong and living,
Binding faithful hearts in one;
Love in Christ is true and giving.
May his will in us be done.

Love is patient and forbearing,
Clothed in Christ's humility,
Gentle, selfless, kind, and caring,
Reaching out in charity.

Love in Christ abides forever,
Fainting not when ills attend;
Love, forgiving and forgiven,
Shall endure until life's end. Amen.

I need a new drug. Not just a vaccine. It's too late for that. I'm already infected. I'm already a carrier. I noticed some symptoms early in the week. My wife, Lisa, was talking to me, asking some questions. We were in the middle of a conversation, then, just like that, I didn't hear a word she was saying. All I could hear were my own questions tumbling over each other in my head - "What's coming? What do we do? What do I do?" Tuesday afternoon, the symptoms got worse. I was at the gas station. I'm filling up my car, thinking through this sermon - "Peace and patience, patience and peace. It'll be just what I need to hear, just what we need to hear." Tank full, I press the button for a receipt; I'm thinking sermon - peace and patience, patience and peace. And then the screen reads: "Clerk has receipt." "NO!" Peace and patience, patience and peace were gone. "I have a 2:30 with Margie. I don't have time for this!" Heading in for my receipt, I tell myself: "I'm preaching patience and peace, peace and patience." I think I put on a good patience and peace face. But in here [mind] ... it wasn't all patience and peace. I need a new drug. Not just a vaccine. I'm already infected, already a carrier - already a carrier of frustration and stress.

And what can we expect? It just might get a bit worse. You know how it works. The first days of Spring Break or summer vacation, life is good, brothers and sisters get along. The last days of break, brothers and sisters are poking at each other, getting on each other's nerves. And it's not just the kids, is it? You've heard married couples, happy couples, loving couples: "I love him." "I love her." "But I don't know what we're going to do. When we retire, we're going to drive each other crazy." We see it at every stage of life, at home, at work. We get on each other's nerves. What we once praised as patience, after a bad day, we rip as not caring. What we once praised as helpfulness, after a bad day, we rip as sticking their nose in our business.

After a bad day. We might be in for some bad days.... I shouldn't say that; we may be in for some challenging days. Put fear and frustration together, and what do we get? Put trouble and stress together, what do we get? My sentences get short and terse. Some people raise their voices. We might think we're at volume level 3-4, but add some stress and frustration we're probably closer to volume level 6-7, maybe 8. And how do we hear someone else's volume level 6-7, maybe 8? Oh, if there's enough stress and frustration in the room, we can hear a frustrated, finger-pointing volume level 4-5 like it's a shouting *Spinal Tap* Level Eleven. I don't know about you, but if I'm hearing *Spinal Tap* Level Eleven it had better be some good music like Thin Lizzy "*The Boys are Back in Town*" or Martin Luther "*A Mighty Fortress is Our God*." If not, chances are pretty good that I'm going from DefCon 1 to 3 to 5. And you know what happens next? Some days - peace and patience. We work things out with Jesus. But some days, after a long day, a bad day, after trouble and stress, after fear and frustration, there might be no patience or peace, just "Ready - Aim - Fire" with no "Ready - Aim," just "Fire! Fire! Fire!" You know what I mean?

So what do we need to do? Because we're in for some fear and frustration, some trouble and stress, what do we need to do? How about this? We need to expect that the other people in our life will get the peace and patience thing down right for us. We should expect that they will handle our fear and frustration with peace and patience. We should expect that they will handle

their fear and frustration with peace and patience. In other words, we should expect that the rest of the world will show us patience and peace, no matter how little patience and peace we show them. How does that sound? If that sounds right to you, you're probably a narcissist. And just for the record, that's neither good nor godly.

Here's a better plan. We're in for some fear and frustration; we're in for some trouble and stress. So what do we do? Instead of getting upset and pointing fingers, instead of getting upset and going DEFCON 5, we get to remember who we are and what we have going for us.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Don't you love the way Paul puts it? **“As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.”** On a bad day, when things are going wrong, we don't always feel like **“God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved,”** do we? Instead of seeing ourselves as God's chosen people, we can feel picked on and singled out (and not in a good way). If we're cooped up in quarantine, we can feel like lepers, unloved and unlovable, worthless and good for nothing, frustrated and stressed. I could go on and on. Instead of going down that hole, you get to see yourself as God sees you. He chose you to be his people. He chose you to be holy, to be set apart, not in isolation or quarantine, but he chose you to be set apart from the world to be together with him. He doesn't just isolate you to see what happens to you, but he has what it takes to treat you. With the life and death of Jesus, he forgives you. He washes you clean with Jesus' blood and covers you with the perfect life of Jesus. So when he sees you, he doesn't see you as a leper to be avoided; he doesn't wrap himself up in plastic from head to toe to keep himself safe from you. No, he sees you as his family, his love, his joy, his delight; and he wraps you up in his life and in his love.

When I forget that I tend to let the fear and frustration, the stress and trouble take over. Some of us get bitey and growley, some of us withdraw into our turtle shells. With Jesus, we don't have to do that to each other. Like Jesus covered himself with our skin to show us God's love, we get to cover ourselves with Jesus to show God's love to the people around us. When we're feeling cooped up, frustrated, stressed and we can't take it any longer, when we're getting on each other's nerves and ready to get in each other's faces Instead of getting defensive - “No, I didn't. Yes, I did.” Instead of getting offensive - “You need to do this; you need to do that; you, you, you.” Instead of all that, take a step back and put on Jesus. With Jesus, we don't need to get all defensive. With Jesus, we don't need to go on the offensive. Why? With Jesus, **“there is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”** - so why get defensive? With Jesus, we have God, and **“if God is for us, who can be against us?”** - so why get offensive? Instead of letting frustration and stress take over, listen with the gentleness and patience of Jesus, and maybe in listening our love will learn a thing or two. I know I could do a better job of that at home. Instead of letting frustration and stress take over, speak with the gentleness and patience of Jesus, and who knows - maybe your love will be answered with love. Maybe not always, maybe not just like that, but who knows what a gentle, encouraging word might do. I imagine that in the next few weeks, we'll have the opportunity to find out.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Hymn - *Christian Worship* 505

Love is the gracious gift of your goodness;
Love is the patient fruit of your care;
Love is the gentle work of your Spirit,
Who is the source of love ev’rywhere.

You loved me first, Lord, sending me Jesus.
Then I responded, trusting your Son.
Now you invite me to love my neighbor,
Showing your true love to ev’ryone.

Love means forgiveness, patience, and kindness;
love I not jealous, boastful, or rude.
Love endures all things, bearing, believing;
Loves hopes forever, rejoices in truth.

Love in a marriage, love freely given,
Love of a husband, love of a wife –
Made to continue, blossom, and flourish,
Grow ever deeper throughout this life.

Love among Christians, love in the fam’ly,
Love for the Savior, whose blood was shed,
Love and submission one to another
As unto Christ, who reigns as our head.

Prayers

from *Christian Worship*, pages 134-139

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.**

Blessing

Brothers and sisters, live in peace and harmony with one another.
Serve the Lord with gladness.

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 give you peace.

A Closing Word

God has chosen us to live in his peace; God has called us to share his peace with others. One of the ways you share his peace with others is through the ministry of St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are able to receive your gifts of support through our website and through the mail. God bless you to be a blessing to those around you!

Hymn - *Christian Worship* 492

1 - Son of God, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us
Honors all our human race,
You, our Head, who, throned in glory
For your own will ever plead:
Fill us with your love and pity;
Heal our wrongs and help our need.

2 - Come, O Christ, and reign among us,
King of Love, and Prince of peace;
Hush the storm of strife and passion:
Bid its cruel discords cease.
By your patient years of toiling,
By your silent hours of pain,
Quench our fevered thirst of pleasure;
Stem our selfish greed for gain.

3 - Bind us all as one together
In your Church's sacred fold,
Weak and healthy, poor and wealthy,
Sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow?
Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken?
Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.

4 - As you, Lord, have lived for others,
So may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted;
Freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver,
Yours the wealth of land and sea;
We but stewards of your bounty
Held in solemn trust will be.