

Real Life Repentance and God's Amazing Grace

A Lenten Series

“Grace to the Unfaithful”



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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As We Gather

“When I encourage you to confess your sins, I am simply encouraging you to be a Christian.” These are words once penned by Martin Luther, the Reformer. They are quite true. Christians simply confess when they sin and fall short of God's glory. Christians are not perfect people, but they are people who have been called by the Spirit of God to be honest and sincere regarding their sins and to seek refuge in the amazing grace of God. God, our Father, is slow to anger, quick to forgive, and abounding in steadfast love. This Lenten season may we all grow in true confession, sincere repentance, and growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, the source of God's grace.

Opening Hymn #439

“O Dearest Jesus, What Law Hast Thou Broken” St. 1, 4, 6, 11, 15

O dearest Jesus, what law hast Thou broken
That such sharp sentence should on Thee be spoken?
Of what great crime hast Thou to make confession,
What dark transgression?

What punishment so strange is suffered yonder!
The Shepherd dies for sheep that loved to wander;
The Master pays the debt His servants owe Him,
Who would not know Him.

There was no spot in me by sin untainted;
Sick with sin's poison, all my heart had fainted;
My heavy guilt to hell had well-nigh brought me,
Such woe it wrought me.

But since my strength will nevermore suffice me
To crucify desires that still entice me,
To all good deeds O let Thy Spirit win me
And reign within me!

And when, dear Lord, before Thy throne in heaven
To me the crown of joy at last is given,
Where sweetest hymns Thy saints forever raise Thee,
I, too, shall praise Thee.

(Rise)

Invocation and Opening Sentences (Psalm 78:5-8)

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel

People: Which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children,

Pastor: That the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn,

People: and arise and tell them to their children.

Pastor: So that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;

People: and that they should not be like their fathers,

Pastor: A stubborn and rebellious generation,

People: A generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Confession & Absolution

Pastor: Psalm 78 details all the wonders that God had done for his people in order to bring them up out of Egypt. It shows how God was caring and compassionate to a people wandering in the wilderness. Yet throughout this time all the people did was complain and desire to be back in Egypt, they created false gods and worshipped them. Verse 37 says *Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not faithful to his covenant.* How alike are we! Christ has led us out of sin, established a New Covenant with us and as he provides for us here in the wilderness we complain and often desire to return to our sinful ways. Let us confess these sins to God our Father.

All: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Verse 38 reads according, *Yet he, being compassionate atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them. He restrained his anger often, and did not stir up all his wrath. So he does for all who confess their sins before him. Therefore, upon this, your confession, by virtue of my office as a called and ordained servant of the Word, and by the command and authority of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

People: Amen.

Pastor: As God's forgiven children, set free from sin and death, go forth to live a new life by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Collect for the Day

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty God, give us grace that we may remain faithful to the covenant you have given us,

People: Strengthen our resolve to follow in the ways of our Lord Jesus Christ, not turning to other gods for His name's sake;

Pastor: Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

Exodus 32:1-35

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."² So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron.⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden^[a] calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD."⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."⁸ They have turned

aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’”⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people.”¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?”

¹²Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?’ Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.’”

¹⁴And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written.¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”¹⁸ But he said, “It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear.”¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’ anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain.²⁰ He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it.²¹ And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?”²² And Aaron said, “Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil.²³ For they said to me, ‘Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’”²⁴ So I said to them, ‘Let any who have gold take it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

²⁵And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies),²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, “Who is on the LORD’s side? Come to me.” And all the sons of Levi gathered around him.²⁷ And he said to them, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel, ‘Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.’”

4 continued

²⁸And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.²⁹ And Moses said, “Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day.”³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”³¹ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold.³² But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.”³³ But the LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.³⁴ But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.”³⁵ Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Exodus 34:1-10

The LORD said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.² Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain.³ No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.”⁴ So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone.⁵ The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”⁸ And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.⁹ And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.”¹⁰ And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ²preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. ³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Hymn #425 “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross”

When I survey the wondrous cross On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast Save in the death of Christ, my God;
all the vain things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!

Sermon “God’s Faithfulness in Spite of Us” Exodus 34

Offertory Pages 192-193

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Amen.

Offerings

As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

Prayers & The 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.

Benediction

Pastor: The amazing grace of the Almighty God, the redeeming love of Jesus, His Son and our Savior, and the comfort and power of the Holy Spirit be and abide with us all.

People: Amen.

Hymn #744 “Amazing Grace”

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;
His grace has brought me safe thus far, His grace will lead me home.

Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail And mortal life shall cease,
Amazing grace shall then prevail In heaven’s joy and peace.

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.

Worship Leader

Lector

Organist

Pastor Josh Grotelueschen

Dalen Heinzen

JoLynn Bender