



ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Welcome to Cross of Christ

Confession and Absolution

with Isaiah 59

Pastor: As baptized children of God, we join in his Name: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

“For our offenses are many in your sight, and our sins testify against us.

Our offenses are ever with us, and we acknowledge our iniquities:

rebellion and treachery against the LORD, turning our backs on our God, inciting revolt and oppression, uttering lies our hearts have conceived.

So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance;

truth has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter.

Truth is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.

The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.

He saw that there was no one,

he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;

so his own arm achieved salvation for him,

and his own righteousness sustained him.

He put on righteousness as his breastplate,

and the helmet of salvation on his head;

he put on the garments of vengeance

and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak."

From Adam and Eve, to you and me today, our sin has brought a curse on humanity and, with it, death. Left to ourselves, we are but dust and ashes. We set aside the season of Lent to sharpen our focus on the true cost of our sins,

and the incredible depth of God's love for us. On Ash Wednesday, we begin this journey by assembling before God with humble hearts, repenting of our sins in "dust and ashes," and trusting in God's mercy:

Vocalists: (♪) Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One,
Have mercy, have mercy on us.

P: "The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,' declares the LORD."

Our sins separated us from our God, and we deserve to be cut off from our Creator forever. But in mercy, God promises to hear those who repent of their sins, and to help us in our need, for the sake of his Son, our Savior.

**All: (♪) Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One,
Have mercy, have mercy on us.**

With contrite hearts, we confess together:

Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I have been sinful from birth. In my thoughts, words, and actions, I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. My sins deserve eternal punishment, and I am truly sorry for them. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, and forgive me all of my transgressions:

**All: (♪) Holy God, holy and mighty,
Holy immortal One,
Have mercy, have mercy on us.**

God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 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 Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

Almighty and merciful God, you never despise what you have made and always forgive those who turn to you. You have created in us a new heart, O Lord; and grateful for your full and gracious pardon, lead us to love you and our neighbor; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Meditation

Luke 18:9-14

⁹ To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ 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. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

¹³ “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.’

¹⁴ “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.”

A Moment of Repentance

Song

“Jesus Sinners Does Receive”
Hymn #304:1-2,6-7

Evening Prayers

Lord God, we thank you for this day of grace now drawing to a close. Stay with us and warm our hearts with your forgiving love in Christ. May the remembrance of our Baptisms, your Supper and your Word keep our faith burning brightly, that we may walk in the light of your presence through the darkness of this world. Hear us as we join to pray:

I thank you my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have graciously kept me this day. Forgive me all my sins, and graciously keep me this night. Into your hands I commend my body and soul and all things. Let your holy angel be with me, that the wicked foe may have no power over me. Amen.

God's Word

2 Corinthians 5:21-6:2

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

¹ As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. ² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Blessing

May the blessing of our eternal God be upon us: his light to guide us, his presence to shelter us, and his peace to unite us.

Amen.

Closing Song "Sweet the Moments, Rich in Blessing"
Hymn #111:1,3-5

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