



LORD, HAVE MERCY

For Failing to Live With Integrity

PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan
Wednesday, April 2, 2025

Welcome to Worship

God's grace welcomes you, and so do we — the pastor and members of Peace! Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all people. By his perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection, Jesus saves all sinners. We learn these truths from the Bible — God's complete plan for our salvation and his guidebook for our lives. Peace greets you with a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

MIDWEEK SERIES: LORD HAVE MERCY

It is one of the most common prayers of God's child. "Lord, have mercy!" Mercy is the withholding of punishment or negative consequences that a guilty person deserves. Thus, when we pray, "Lord, have mercy," 1) we are acknowledging that we have lived in ways deserving of God's condemnation and punishment, and 2) we are begging God to not condemn or punish us. How important is that prayer? If you cannot say it with sincerity, you cannot be saved. For if you cannot speak that prayer, you cannot possibly believe you need a Savior. Therefore, God gave us his law, in part, so that we would see our need for mercy. St. Paul writes, "I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law" (Romans 7:7). And God gave us the gospel that we might know he has shown us mercy.

Thus, it is good and right that in this solemn season of Lent, we would review God's law as revealed in the Ten Commandments and connect it with Christ's passion. We will how we have shattered all the Commandments and are deserving of punishment. However, will we also see how Jesus took the suffering we deserved upon himself. Seeing both, may the Spirit empower us to pray, "Lord, have mercy!" and confidently believe that in Christ, we have God's mercy in inexhaustible abundance.

Week 1: For Our Incessant Idolatry

Week 2: For Demonstrating Irreverence and Despising Your Rest

Week 3: For Treating Others Like Trash, Not Treasure

Week 4: For Failing to Live With Integrity

Week 5: For Abusing Your Commandments

TODAY'S FOCUS: FOR FAILING TO LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

We use the word “integrity” to refer to something being in good condition. So, we talk about the structural integrity of a building or of a ship’s hull. We mean those things are “sound” and “whole.” We use “integrity” in reference to people too. Generally, if we speak of someone having integrity, we mean that there’s a wholeness to their character. Their morals are sound. If someone lives with integrity, it is not simply that they talk and behave decently. We would say the reason their behavior is proper is because their values and desires are proper.

The first six Commandments deal with our relationships with others: God and our fellow man. The final four Commandments get at the question of personal integrity. When someone steals, lies, or covets, it is a clear indication that their values and desires are highly improper. Such a person lacks honesty, empathy, and contentment. They say and do bad things because they are bad, not “sound and whole.” It is harsh, yet unfailingly true. Thus, when we break one of these Commandments, it is pointless to make excuses. Let us simply cry out, “Lord, have mercy, for failing to live with integrity!” And let us trust the Christ, who died so that we might be made “sound and whole.”



Order of Service: Evening Prayer

For many centuries, Christians have observed special midweek Lenten services. These services cause us to contemplate the reflective nature of our faith as well as review the passion history.

Please stand.

Opening Dialogue

Our help is in the name of the Lord.
Who made heaven and earth.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, during the days of Lent, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.

The time of Lent reminds us that to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, we must also know the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to confess your sins, ask our Father for forgiveness, and commit yourselves to this struggle.

Confession

Lord, to You I Make Confession st. 1



Lord, to you I make con- fes - sion: I have sinned and gone a - stray;



I have mul-ti-plied trans - gres-sion, Cho-sen for my-self my way.



Led by you to see my er - rors, Lord, I trem-ble at your ter-rors.

Absolution

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not desire the death of sinners but rather that they turn from their wickedness and live. Therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son T and of the Holy Spirit.

During these days of Lent, let us implore God to give us renewal and his Holy Spirit. May we continue to abide in the true faith and at the last be received by him through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

For your Son has suf-fered for me, Giv'n him - self to res-cue me,
 Died to save me and re - store me, Rec - on - ciled and set me free.
 Je - sus' cross a-lone can van-quisth Thesedark fears and soothe this an-guish.

Prayer: Psalm 15

Lord, we dare not come into your holy presence with our own righteousness. But because your Son lived the perfect life in our place—because his walk was blameless and he always did what was righteous—we will never be shaken. Make our walk be blameless too, so that our lives are a sacrifice of thanksgiving to him for all he has accomplished for us. In his name we pray. Amen.

Please be seated.

Week 4 Passion Reading

Luke 23:1-25

¹Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. ²And they began to accuse him, saying, “We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king.”

³So Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

⁴Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.”

⁵ But they insisted, “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

⁶ On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. ⁷ When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

⁸ When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. ⁹ He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. ¹¹ Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. ¹² That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies.

¹³ Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, ¹⁴ and said to them, “You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. ¹⁵ Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. ¹⁶ Therefore, I will punish him and then release him.”

¹⁸ But the whole crowd shouted, “Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!” ¹⁹ (Barabbas had been thrown into prison for an insurrection in the city, and for murder.)

²⁰ Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. ²¹ But they kept shouting, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

²² For the third time he spoke to them: “Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will have him punished and then release him.”

²³ But with loud shouts they insistently demanded that he be crucified, and their shouts prevailed. ²⁴ So Pilate decided to grant their demand. ²⁵ He released the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, and surrendered Jesus to their will.

Hymn

2 Yet, though conscience' voice appall me,
Father, I will seek your face.
Though your child I dare not call me,
yet receive me to your grace.
Do not for my sins forsake me,
do not let your wrath o'ertake me.

First Reading

Proverbs 6:12-19

¹² A troublemaker and a villain,
who goes about with a corrupt mouth,
¹³ who winks maliciously with his eye,
signals with his feet
and motions with his fingers,
¹⁴ who plots evil with deceit in his heart—
he always stirs up conflict.
¹⁵ Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant;
he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.
¹⁶ There are six things the Lord hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
¹⁷ haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸ a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
¹⁹ a false witness who pours out lies
and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Second Reading

1 Timothy 6:6-10

⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Sermon

The 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th Commandments

From Luther's Small Catechism

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Hymn

- 4 Lord, on you I cast my burden—
sink it in the deepest sea!
Let me know your gracious pardon,
cleanse me from iniquity.
Let your Spirit leave me never,
make me only yours forever.

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

Doxology

Now to him, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or
imagine, according to his power at work within us, to him be glory in the
Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever!
Amen.

23B Shepherd Me, O God

Psalm

Refrain



Shep - herd me, O God, be - yond my wants, be -
yond my fears, from death in - to life.

- 1 God is my shepherd, so nothing shall I want,
I rest in the meadows of faithfulness and love,
I walk by the quiet waters of peace. *Refrain*
- 2 Gently you raise me and heal my weary soul,
you lead me by pathways of righteousness and truth,
my spirit shall sing the music of your name. *Refrain*
- 3 Though I should wander the valley of death,
I fear no evil, for you are at my side,
your rod and your staff, my comfort and my hope. *Refrain*
- 4 You have set me a banquet of love in the face of hatred,
crowning me with love beyond my pow'r to hold. *Refrain*
- 5 Surely your kindness and mercy follow me all the days of my life;
I will dwell in the house of my God forevermore. *Refrain*

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