

LENTEN MIDWEEK

March 16, 2022

MOUNTAIN TO MOUNTAIN: MOUNT MORIAH TO MOUNT ZION

Today, we journey from mountain to mountain. Mountains are amazing and awe-inspiring, but to journey through or to climb them is no easy task. When Abraham saw Mount Moriah, he was neither inspired nor amazed. His heart was filled with fear and dread, for on this mountain he had been told to provide a sacrifice: his son Isaac. It was a difficult mountain to climb. But on this mountain, the Lord God will provide. God rescued Isaac from the knife of Abraham in order that He might provide another sacrifice, a perfect Lamb without blemish or spot. Later, Mount Moriah would become Mount Zion, where the Jerusalem temple would be built. Although Jesus was sacrificed on Mount Calvary, His blood was brought to the Holy of Holies in the temple and sprinkled for our forgiveness, life, and salvation. It was a difficult mountain to climb, but the journey to that mountain leads us to the mountain of the new Zion — heaven.

Hymn “We Are Exiles from the Garden”

We are exiles from the garden,
Banished by our sinful choice,
Terrified to seek His pardon,
Hiding from our Father’s voice.
Underneath the branches swaying,
Sweat and blood fall to the ground.
In the darkness, Christ is praying;
He comes forward to be bound.

Leaves will fail our vain concealing
Our true nakedness and shame.
We must rend our hearts, revealing
All our guilt and sinful blame.
Jesus takes our flesh and sentence
As His clothes are claimed below.
We fall down in true repentance;
His new robe He will bestow.

On the mount, the Lord is waiting
For the proper sacrifice.
What is worth His wrath abating?
Who could pay the dreadful price?
God the Son will be the scion.
God the Father will provide.
God the Spirit points to Zion;
There, with God, we will abide.

On this journey we are taking,
We fear not what lies in store.
Though our feeble wills are breaking,
We know Christ has gone before.
As we walk the way completed,
On His throne, the Savior waits.
Death and hell have been unseated.
We behold the open gates!

Opening Sentences

P: Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not Your peace at my tears!

C: **For I am a sojourner with You, a guest, like all my fathers.** *Psalm. 39:12*

P: Thus declares the LORD of hosts: Return to Me, says the LORD of hosts,

C: **and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts.** *Zechariah 1:3*

P: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;

C: **let him return to the LORD, that He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.** *Isaiah 55:7*

P: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

C: **they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.** *Isaiah 35:10*

C: **Glory be to the Father**

and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear to my cry; hold not your peace at my tears!

C: **For I am a sojourner with you, a guest, like all my fathers.** *Psalm 39:12*

Confession

P: We are on a journey from a deserved exile to a gracious promised land. Although we merit nothing, because our heavenly Father promises forgiveness and mercy to all who call on Him for Jesus' sake, let us go to Him, confessing our sin.

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination

P: Heavenly Father, we are fallen creatures, prone to hiding our faults from one another, yet knowing our sins are laid bare before You.

C: **Forgive us and clothe us with Christ's own righteousness.**

P: We have erred and strayed from Your way.

C: **Forgive us and turn our feet toward the paradise You promise.**

P: We have attempted to placate Your just demands by our own efforts.

C: **Forgive us for the sake of Your Son's sacrifice in our stead.**

P: We have often failed to reflect the new life You granted us in our Baptism.

C: **Forgive us and drown the old Adam within us.**

P: We have eaten "forbidden fruit" in our disobedient thinking, speaking, and acting.

C: **Forgive us and grant us the new life won on the tree of the cross.**

P: We have failed to trust Your care and protection as we journey through this wilderness.

C: **Forgive us and accompany us on our pilgrim way.**

Forgiveness

P: Our gracious God, even when we were dead in our trespasses, You made us alive together with Christ. You who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. May He Who began this good work in you bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (*Ephesians 2:5, 13 & Philippians 1:6*).

C: **Amen.**

Scripture Reading *Genesis 22:1-14*

P: God provides the sacrificial lamb in place of Isaac; it is a type of Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificed in our stead. We read the words of Abraham, for his faith and ours are both the gift of God. A reading from the twenty-second chapter of Genesis.

After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said,

C: "Here I am."

P: "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac. And he cut the wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men,

C: "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you."

P: And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son. And he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said,

C: "Here I am, my son."

P: He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said,

C: "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son."

P: So they went both of them together. When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said,

C: "Here I am."

P: "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called the name of that place, "The LORD will provide"; as it is said to this day,

C: "On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Scripture Reading *John 3:14-17*

P: A reading from the third chapter of John.

As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Hymn #423 "Jesus, Refuge of the Weary"

Jesus, refuge of the weary,
Blest Redeemer, whom we love,
Fountain in life's desert dreary,
Savior from the world above:
Often have Your eyes, offended,
Gazed upon the sinner's fall;
Yet upon the cross extended,
You have borne the pain of all.

Do we pass that cross unheeding,
Breathing no repentant vow,
Though we see You wounded, bleeding,
See Your thorn-encircled brow?
Yet Your sinless death has brought us
Life eternal, peace, and rest;
Only what Your grace has taught us
Calms the sinner's deep distress.

Jesus, may our hearts be burning
With more fervent love for You;
May our eyes be ever turning
To behold Your cross anew
Till in glory, parted never
From the blessed Savior's side,
Graven in our hearts forever,
Dwell the cross, the Crucified.

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Sermon

"Mountain to Mountain: Mt. Moriah to Mt. Zion"

Offering

Prayer of the Church

P: We are returning from exile, listening to the inviting Word of God, full of grace and truth. Let us respond to Him in prayer.

P: Gracious God, offering full and free forgiveness,

C: we come in spiritual sackcloth and ashes, painfully aware of our sins and failings. Graciously wash us and clothe us with the robe of Christ's own righteousness so that we may live eternally with all Your saints.

P: Eden's Lord and ours,

C: hear us and all who call out to You in pain and sorrow, sweat or tears. Remind us of Your painful victory over every temptation, and strengthen us to follow where You have led the way.

P: Loving Father, calling us to Mount Calvary,

C: remove from us our fear of Your righteous judgment for our sins; strengthen our faith in the all-availing sacrifice of Your Son in our stead.

P: Spirit of life,

C: remind us again of our Baptism, in which our old Adam was drowned; strengthen us to live in the freedom of the children of God.

P: Lord Jesus, Savior and Guide,

C: give us the eyes of faith to see the tree of life awaiting us in heaven, and guide us to follow where You have led the way.

P: Protecting Father,

C: assure us of Your presence on our journey through the desert of this world and bring us at last to the paradise purchased by Your Son.

P: O Holy Spirit,

C: nourish our faith and restore our souls each time we come to the Table of the Lord and receive His body and blood, a foretaste of the feast to come.

P: Holy and merciful Lord over all,

C: we feel the burden of our sin; renew in us the firm faith that Your Son has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, giving His life for ours.

P: Everlasting Father,

C: Our Savior has conquered death. Fill us with rejoicing, confident that we shall therefore gather around the eternal throne of the Lamb, Your Son, Who with You and the Holy Spirit are one God, now and forever. Amen.

P: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: 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.

Nunc Dimittis

Luke 2:29–32 (antiphon: liturgical text)

P: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping,

C: that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.

P: Lord, now You let Your servant go in peace; Your word has been fulfilled.

C: My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal You to the nations and the glory of Your people Israel.

P: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping,

C: that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.

Benediction

P: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, and ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

C: Amen.

Hymn #878 “Abide with Me”

final verse will be sung a capella

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea.
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

*And when at last You come again to save,
Raise us to life and bring us from the grave!
And then with all Your people, strong and free
I shall rejoice, for You abide with me.*

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Dismissal

P: Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

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