

By His Wounds We Are Healed

Week 4:

March 25

The Wounds of Adultery

Order of Service

Jesus is accused of associating with tax collectors and prostitutes.

Opening Hymn

“Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed”
Carol

Alas! And did my Savior bleed and did my sov'reign die?

Would he devote that sacred head for sinners such as I?

Was it for sins that I had done he groaned upon the tree?

Amazing pity, grace unknown, and love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide and shut its glories in

When God, the mighty maker, died for his own creatures' sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face while his dear cross appears,

Dissolve my heart in thankfulness, and melt my eyes to tears.

But tears of grief cannot repay the debt of love I owe;

Here, Lord, I give myself away; it's all that I can do.

Response

P In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Out of his anguish Christ shall see light;

C he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

P The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,

C and he shall bear their iniquities.

P Christ was wounded for our transgressions,

C crushed for our iniquities;

P upon him was the punishment that made us whole,

C and by his wounds we are healed.

Confession and Forgiveness

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

C Most merciful God, we confess to you that we have broken your commandments by our own thoughts, words, and deeds. We are undeserving of your presence; we deserve to be shunned for the impurity within us. We have not loved our brothers and sisters as we ought, and we have not cared for your creation. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us, and give us the healing power of your love that we may walk again in your ways and live to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P God is gracious and merciful, and he desires that we be made free of the burden of our sins. Through Jesus Christ, who bore the cross for our sake and for the sake of the whole world, there is healing, hope, and life. Your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Hymn

“There’s A Wideness”
Carol

There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kindness in God’s justice, which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth’s sorrows are more felt than up in heav’n.
There is no place where earth’s failings have such kindly judgment giv’n.
There is welcome for the sinner and a promised grace made good;
There is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.
There is grace enough for thousands of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations in that upper home of bliss.

Old Testament Reading

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

Epistle Reading

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 9:9-13

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ ¹²But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but

those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

Children’s Message

Sermon Hymn

Carol

“In Christ Alone” By Getty

In Christ alone my hope is found He is my light, my strength, my song This cornerstone, this solid ground Firm through the fiercest drought and storm What heights of love, what depths of peace When fears are stilled, when strivings cease My comforter, my all in all Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh Fullness of God in helpless babe This gift of love and righteousness Scorned by the ones He came to save 'Til on that cross as Jesus died The wrath of God was satisfied For every sin on Him was laid Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay Light of the world by darkness slain Then bursting forth in glorious day Up from the grave He rose again And as He stands in victory Sin's curse has lost its grip on me For I am His and He is mine Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death This is the pow'r of Christ in me From life's first cry to final breath Jesus commands my destiny No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man Can ever pluck me from His hand 'Til He returns or calls me home Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand

No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man Can ever pluck me from His hand 'Til He returns or calls me home Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand

Sermon

Pastor Mary

I strongly believe that we are all called to live in a holy way. Set apart. We as Christians are asked to mold our lives, our actions, our words to be Christ-like. We are ambassadors, responsible for being God’s representative in this dog eat dog world. Sometimes it isn’t easy. In fact, it is downright hard when we look out for ourselves and our families, and we should do that. But not to the detriment of everyone else. That’s the key. We need to allow the Holy Spirit within us to guide us, soften our hearts and move us in ways that really is a way that God calls us to be.

Paul preaches Christ crucified. It’s a way that can make society wonder, “what? Why would you do that?”. I have been asked that many, many times. When I’ve been misused, or bullied, or taken advantage of I still hang on, intentionally loving the person or persons, walking through the shadows together. I’m not condoning bad or abusive behavior, nor do I ask you to put up with things that injure others. But understand what is needed, and how to make changes in another and grow together. Don’t give up on people. Their behavior may be unacceptable, but their need to hear the Gospel, know that they are loved as a child of God is the call. That’s not saying that I’m so great, I do my share of complaining, but it is God who is so great to love me, and in return I simply try to love the image of God in others. Underneath our dysfunction, our worldliness, our angry, our stubbornness, simply our humanness, there is that glimpse of God I hope that grows inside of us, inside of me. Trust

me, I'm not perfect. But God is. He died for all the ugly inside of me and you, even as we wound him, he loves us. Mirror that! Don't allow abuse, but still love another, stay to the best of your ability and safety intentionally loving and forgiving not excusing sin, but letting God work through you to change.

I know that you already watch and probably judge your own actions. But remember the impression we make. Virtue is learned, vice is human. Sometimes we are called to do what doesn't come naturally, what doesn't feel good.

I read this story from another pastor, "Dr. Stephen L. Anderson, a professor in Ontario, Canada, had what he called a moment of "startling clarity" while teaching a section on ethics in his senior philosophy class. He needed an "attention-getter"—something to shock his students and force them to take an ethical stand. He hoped that this would form a "baseline" from which they could evaluate other ethical decisions. Here's how he explained what happened next: I decided to open by simply displaying, without comment, the photo of Bibi Aisha. Aisha was the Afghani teenager who was forced into an abusive marriage with a Taliban fighter, who abused her and kept her with his animals. When she attempted to flee, her family caught her, hacked off her nose and ears, and left her for dead in the mountains ... She was saved by a nearby American hospital. I felt quite sure that my students, seeing the suffering of this poor girl of their own age, would have a clear ethical reaction The picture is horrific. Aisha's beautiful eyes stare hauntingly back at you above the mangled hole that was once her nose. Some of my students could not even raise their eyes to look at it. I could see that they were experiencing deep emotions. But I was not prepared for their reaction. I had expected strong aversion; but that's not what I got. Instead, they became confused. They seemed not to know what to think. They spoke timidly, afraid to make any moral judgment at all. They were unwilling to criticize any situation originating in a different culture. They said, "Well, we might not like it, but maybe over there it's okay." Another said, "It's just wrong to judge other cultures." I wondered, "How can kids who have been so thoroughly basted in the language of minority rights be so numb to a clear moral offense?" No matter how I prodded they did not leave their nonjudgmental position. I left that class shaking my head. It seemed clear to me that for some students—clearly not all—the lesson of character education initiatives is acceptance of all things at all costs. While we may hope some are capable of bridging the gap between principled morality and this ethically vacuous relativism, it is evident that a good many are not. For them, the overriding message is "never judge, never criticize, never take a position." Dr. Stephen L. Anderson, "Moments of Startling Clarity," Education Forum (Fall 2011)"

What is acceptable in the world or culture sometimes overshadows God's desire for us. He wants us to bear his image in our community. That is one of love, that is one of forgiveness, that is one of second chances, that is one of relationship. Rules too are important, make no mistake, but norms should be based on love, care, and concern for each other. We are called to love, not excuse, forgive but not allow harm.

I love this: Dale Carnegie is reported to have said: "Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are."

This is why Paul is so adamant throughout 1 Corinthians to correct behavior of those who call themselves Christian. He is writing this 3 years after the church plant. The letter was written during his second missionary journey and he is trying to get this band of believers to stop their infighting, misunderstanding and creating of factions to return to a church of unity. Paul calls that church and us to directly deal with issues with God's love. He rails over the Greek way of taking everyone to a non Christian court over every little issue. He rails over the abuse of women and prostitution, taking advantage of others. Of therefore breaking trusts and being true to your commitments and loves.

Paul addresses Character formation. And that formation takes place in the process of making thousands of smaller decisions over the course of time. The choice to deny one self, die to oneself, to let go of socially acceptable activities that Jesus Christ calls us to move beyond and above society's expectations. Integrity is judged by our consistency of what we say and what we do. Paul is encouraging his new church plant to live out its values.

I want to tell you another story shared on the internet from another pastor, "On December 2, 2012, a Spanish long-distance runner named Ivan Fernandez Anaya was competing in a cross-country race in the Spanish countryside. Anaya was running in second-place, well behind the race leader, the Kenyan runner and Olympic medalist Abel Mutai. As they entered the finishing stretch, Mutai, the certain winner of the race, suddenly stopped running. Apparently, he mistakenly thought he had already crossed the finish line. A Spanish newspaper reported what happened next: "Fernández Anaya quickly caught up with him, but instead of exploiting Mutai's mistake to speed past and claim an unlikely victory, he stayed behind and, using gestures, guided the Kenyan to the line and let him cross first." When asked what motivated this kind deed, Anaya said, "He was the rightful winner. He created a gap that I couldn't have closed if he hadn't made a mistake. As soon as I saw he was stopping, I knew I wasn't going to pass him." Surprisingly, Anaya's coach, the famous Spanish runner Martin Fiz, was disappointed with Anaya's display of sportsmanship. Fiz said, "He has wasted an occasion. Winning always makes you more of an athlete. You have to go out to win." But Anaya stood by his decision. He told reporters, Even if they had told me that winning would have earned me a place in the Spanish team for the European championships, I wouldn't have done it either ... because today, with the way things are in all circles, in soccer, in society, in politics, where it seems anything goes, a gesture of honesty goes down well. Carlos Arribas, "Honesty of the long-distance runner," El Pais (In English), (12-19-12)"

God calls us to do the Godly thing and to form our characters intentionally and slowly through love for God and for our fellow human beings. He calls us to be church in these crazy times. Will you be a royal priesthood in the world this week? Will you stand for what is right? Will you let yourself lose or not even compete so others can see the beauty of Christ in your soul? After all, you have already one by Christ's commitment to be in the Kingdom with him. God bless you. Stay safe but continue to love as God calls you. Amen.

Prayers of the People

P Let us pray for the Church, for all in need, and for the whole of God's creation. That throughout these forty days of Lent, you may give your people hope that it is Jesus, our Lord, who leads the way and takes into his body on the cross the sins of the whole world.

C Heal us, O God.

P That we come to the truth that all are favored in your grace, and that we are all welcomed in your presence.

C Heal us, O God.

P That all who have been excluded in life, those who are in prisons, those who are alone, infirm, unloved, or bullied, that they may all know that your love is constant and will not abandon them.

C Heal us, O God.

P That people of differing ages, genders, classes or views may put away all malice and work together for wholeness and healing in the world.

C Heal us, O God.

P For those who are dying, that they may trust in the banquet with all the saints at the final table in your kingdom with Christ, our Lord.

C Heal us, O God.

P Into your healing, wounded hands for our sake, we commend all for whom we pray.

C By Christ's wounds, we are healed. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

All: 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

P May the healing presence of almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **C Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Carol

“Broken Vessels” Hillsong

Oh these pieces Broken and scattered In mercy gathered Mended and whole Empty-handed
But not forsaken I've been set free I've been set free

Refrain

Amazing grace How sweet the sound That saved a wretch like me, oh I once was lost
But now I'm found Was blind but now I see Oh, I can see it now Oh, I can see the love in Your
eyes Laying yourself down Raising up the broken to life

You take our failure You take our weakness You set Your treasure In jars of clay So take this
heart, Lord I'll be Your vessel The world to see Your life in me, oh

Refrain