



## *Fasting from Denial*

# Fifth Sunday of Lent *March 21, 2021*

Prelude

Confession

*P: Most holy and merciful God,*

**C: we confess to you and to one another,  
and before the whole company of heaven,  
that we have sinned by our fault,  
by our own fault,  
by our own most grievous fault,  
in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

*We have not loved you with our whole heart, and mind, and strength.*

**We diminish our respect and awe of You by not putting our relationship with you on the top of our priority list. We relegate You to being our god of convenience and comfort rather than Creator of the Cosmos, and, in this way, we limit the power you have in our lives. Have mercy on us, O God.**

*We let other voices speak to us of fulfillment, hope and peace.*

**We have been tempted to turn away from the truth you offer us. We have doubted your presence, your power and your promise. Have mercy on us, O God.**

*We have shut our ears to your call to love and serve others with the same*

*compassionate love and service Christ offers us.*

**We have not been diligent in staying keenly aware of how we can be a source of comfort, hope and sustenance to those who suffer, or are in despair, or deprived of what they need to live. We have found security in protecting and preserving our abundant blessings. Have mercy on us, O God.**

*We misuse and abuse the role you have given us in and over creation.*

**We exploit and squander the earth's resources without inconveniencing ourselves with consideration for the sustainability of life in the future. We assume the power of gods, but fail to seek the wisdom of God in the use of our power, focusing too much on our satisfaction in this moment rather than comprehending the full scope of our actions. We privilege our lives over the lives of other creatures without respect for the depth of the interconnectedness of all life. Have mercy on us, O God.**

*We do not always own our own problems, nor do we take enough responsibility for working to solve them.*

**We scapegoat, we make excuses, we get distracted. We do not bring them to you and open ourselves to the Spirit's guidance through unexpected voices and resources. We become discontented because we resign to empty contentment. We default to following the norm rather than clinging to the distinction of being a Child of God. Hear us, O God, for your mercy is great.**

## Lenten Hymn

*1. When I fear my faith will fail,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
When the tempter would prevail,  
He will hold me fast.  
I could never keep my hold  
Through life's fearful path;  
For my love is often cold;  
He must hold me fast.*

### Refrain

*He will hold me fast,  
He will hold me fast;  
For my Savior loves me so,  
He will hold me fast.*

*2. Those He saves are His delight,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Precious in His holy sight,  
He will hold me fast.  
He'll not let my soul be lost;  
His promises shall last;  
Bought by Him at such a cost,  
He will hold me fast.*

### Refrain

*3. For my life He bled and died,  
Christ will hold me fast;  
Justice has been satisfied,  
He will hold me fast.  
Raised with Him to endless life,*

**He will hold me fast**  
*Till our faith is turned to sight,*  
**When he comes at last!**  
*Refrain*

*Words vv 1-2: Ada Habershon (1861-19168);  
Alt. Words vv.1-2, Words v. 3, and Music:  
Matt Merker*

## Greeting & Kyrie

*P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C: And also with you.**

*In peace, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.*

**Lord, have mercy.**

*Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.*

**Amen**

## Prayer of the Day

*P: The Lord be with you*

**C: And also with you**

*P: Let us pray:*

**C: Merciful Father, you have never denied your grace to your faithful ones, even when we have denied our faith in you. Send us the Spirit, that we will be convinced, courageous and fully committed to the truths you reveal and teach, that there will be reason to deny living out the radical reality you intend for us and your whole creation. We pray this in the name of the one who did not deny us of redemption even at the cost of the cross, Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

**T**He three visitors who had lunched with Abraham said to him, "Where is your wife Sarah?" And he said, "There, in the tent." Then one said, "I will return, yes return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son." And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I become worn and is there to be pleasure for me? And my Lord is old." But Yahweh said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' Is anything beyond Yahweh? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son." Sarah pretended, saying, "No, I did not laugh"; for she was afraid. But he said, "No, indeed, you laughed."

*R: The Word of the Lord!*

**C: Thanks be to God!**

*See, the LORD's hand is not too short to save,  
nor his ear too dull to hear.*

**Rather, your iniquities have been barriers  
between you and your God,  
and your sins have hidden his face from you  
so that he does not hear.**

*For your hands are defiled with blood,  
and your fingers with iniquity;*

**your lips have spoken lies,  
your tongue mutters wickedness.**

*No one brings suit justly,  
no one goes to law honestly;*

**they rely on empty pleas, they speak lies,  
conceiving mischief and begetting iniquity.**

*They hatch adders' eggs,  
and weave the spider's web;*

**whoever eats their eggs dies,  
and the crushed egg hatches out a viper.**

*Their webs cannot serve as clothing;*

*they cannot cover themselves with what they make.*  
**Their works are works of iniquity,  
and deeds of violence are in their hands.**  
*Their feet run to evil,  
and they rush to shed innocent blood;*  
**their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity,  
desolation and destruction are in their highways.**  
*The way of peace they do not know,  
and there is no justice in their paths.*  
**Their roads they have made crooked;  
no one who walks in them knows peace.**  
*Therefore justice is far from us,  
and righteousness does not reach us;*  
**we wait for light, and lo! there is darkness;  
and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.**  
*We grope like the blind along a wall,  
groping like those who have no eyes;*  
**we stumble at noon as in the twilight,  
among the vigorous as though we were dead.**  
*We all growl like bears;  
like doves we moan mournfully.*  
**We wait for justice, but there is none;  
for salvation, but it is far from us.**  
*For our transgressions before you are many,  
and our sins testify against us.*  
**Our transgressions indeed are with us,  
and we know our iniquities:  
transgressing, and denying the LORD,  
and turning away from following our God,**  
*talking oppression and revolt,  
conceiving lying words and uttering them from the heart.*  
**Justice is turned back,  
and righteousness stands at a distance;**  
*for truth stumbles in the public square,  
and uprightness cannot enter.*  
**Truth is lacking,  
and whoever turns from evil is despoiled.**

**T**herefore, I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The word is faithful: If we have died with him, we will also live

with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful--for he is not empowered deny himself.

Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

*L: The Word of the Lord!*

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## Verse

*1. In the hour of trial,  
Jesus, plead for me*

**Lest by base denial**

**I unworthy be.**

*When you see me waver,*

*With a look recall,*

**Nor for fear or favor**

**Ever let me fall.**

*2. With forbidden pleasures  
Should this vain world charm*

**Or its tempting treasures**

**Spread to work me harm,**

*Bring to my remembrance*

*Sad Gethsemane*

**Or, in darker semblance,**

**Cross-crowned Calvary.**

*3. Should your mercy send me  
Sorrow, toil, and woe,*

**Or should pain attend me**

**On my path below,**

*Grant that I may never*

*Fail your cross to view;*

**Grant that I may ever**

**Cast my care on you.**

*4. When my life is ending,*

*Though in grief or pain,*

**When my body changes**

**Back to dust again,**

*On your truth relying,*

*Through that mortal strife,*

**Jesus, take me, dying,**

**To eternal life.**

## Gospel Acclamation

*P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 25<sup>th</sup> Chapter.*

**C: Glory to you, O Lord!**

## Gospel

## Luke 12

**M**eanwhile, the myriads of the crowds gathered so that they trampled on one another and Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, "You, pay attention to the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy. But, know this, nothing is being covered up that will not be

uncovered, and nothing is hidden that will not be made known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in the inner room will be proclaimed from the housetops. "But I tell you, my friends, you may not fear those killing the body, and after that not having anything more to do. But I will reveal to you whom you may fear; fear him, the one, who, after he has killed, has the authority to cast into ghenna. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid! You are much different from the sparrows. But I say to you, all who may confess me before men, the Son of Man also will confess him before the angels of God; but whoever denied me before people, he will deny before the angels of God.

P: *The Gospel of our Lord!*

C: **Praise to you, O Christ!**

## Sermon

### Hymn of the Day

769

*If you but trust in God to guide you  
and place your confidence in him,  
**you'll find him always there beside you  
to give you hope and strength within;**  
for those who trust God's changeless love  
**build on the rock that will not move.***

*Only be still and wait his pleasure  
in cheerful hope with heart content.  
**He fills your needs to fullest measure  
with what discerning love has sent;**  
doubt not our inmost wants are known  
**to him who chose us for his own.***

*Sing, pray, and keep his ways unswerving,  
offer your service faithfully,  
**and trust his word; though undeserving,  
you'll find his promise true to be.**  
God never will forsake in need  
**the soul that trusts in him indeed.***

# Apostles Creed

*P: I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church, the faith in which we baptize. Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises?*

**C: We do with the help of God.**

*P: Do you believe in God the Father?*

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

*P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?*

**C: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived of the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

*P: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?*

**C: I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen**

## Offering

*P: Let us pray:*

**C: Loving God, we give you thanks for the bounty and blessings of our lives, returning these offerings as signs of our gratitude. May these gifts further your work and sustain your kingdom among us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

## Prayers of the Church & Lord's Prayer Benediction & Dismissal