

RETHINKING DEVOTED COMMITMENT

Rethinking Religion

March 17, 2024



CHRIST Lutheran Church

"Our hope in Jesus is an anchor for the soul." Hebrews 6:19

500 Park Street | West Salem, WI 54669 | 608-786-1250

Pastor

Pastor Frelitz

Organist

Sunday: Chris Bright

Monday: Jean McClellan

Worship Hosts

Sunday 8:00 AM: Todd & Sue Greene & Team D

Sunday 10:30 AM: Jim & Jean Hauser & Team J

Monday 6:30 PM: Osgood

Mission Statement

With the help of the Triune God, our mission is to gladly nurture the spiritual and physical needs of our congregation, to train our children in the knowledge of the Lord, to reach out to others with the saving message of Jesus' love and forgiveness.

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. In our service we gather before our almighty God to offer him our worship and praise. We also gather to strengthen ourselves through the study of God's holy and powerful Word.

SERIES THEME: RETHINKING RELIGION

Everyone has assumptions about God. Likewise, everyone has assumptions about religion. Increasingly, those assumptions are negative. Americans are walking away from Christianity in breathtaking numbers. It raises the question. How do those people know if their assumptions about religion are correct? Do they really understand Christianity at all? Do we? Do we truly Understand this religion?

In the season of Lent, as much as any other, Jesus teaches things that turns the world's assumptions about religion completely upside down. We call it "Christianity." So, in this holy season, let us go straight to Christ and let him replace assumptions with truth. Jesus, help us to rethink religion!

Our worship follows this pattern.

- † First Sunday in Lent: Rethinking Trials, Tests, and Temptations
- † Second Sunday in Lent: Rethinking Suffering under the Cross
- † Third Sunday in Lent: Rethinking the Worth of Worship
- † Fourth Sunday in Lent: Rethinking the Solution to Sin
- † **Fifth Sunday in Lent: Rethinking Devoted Commitment**
- † PALM SUNDAY/Sunday of the Passion: Rethinking Real Strength

THEME OF THE DAY: RETHINKING DEVOTED COMMITMENT

Religious sociologists sometimes divide Christians into two groups: committed Christians and cultural Christians. The former are usually defined as those who are active in a congregation, who pray regularly, who read Scripture, etc. The latter are those individuals who call themselves Christian and perhaps have some Christian beliefs. Yet, they do not strive to live a Christian life. They are not interested in church involvement.

Those definitions are interesting when trying to understand shifts in American Christianity. However, they demonstrate a false assumption about the Christian religion. There is indeed a devoted commitment at the center of Christianity, but it is not man's commitment to God. Even believers will at times demonstrate lukewarm commitment at best. Instead, at the heart of Christianity we find God's devotion and commitment to us. It is a devoted commitment so strong that it put God on the cross.

THE SERVICE (SETTING ONE) PG. 154

Handbells: Beneath The Cross

419 Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle

CW 419



1 Sing, my tongue, the glo - rious bat - tle, waged in blood on
2 Tell how, when at length the full - ness of th'ap - point - ed
3 Thus, with thir - ty years ac - com - plished, he went forth from
4 Faith - ful cross, true sign of tri - umph, be for all the
5 Un - to God be praise and glo - ry; to the Fa - ther



Cal - va - ry; o'er the cross, tri - um - phant tro - phy,
time was come, he, the Word, was born of wom - an,
Naz - a - reth, des - tined, ded - i - cat - ed, will - ing,
no - blest tree; none in fo - liage, none in blos - som,
and the Son, to th'e - ter - nal Spir - it hon - or



tell who strug - gled val - iant - ly; tell how earth's Re -
left for us his Fa - ther's home, blazed the path of
did his work and met his death; like a lamb he
none in fruit your e - qual be, sym - bol of the
now and ev - er - more be done— praise and glo - ry



deem - er con - quered— vic - tim gain - ing vic - to - ry.
true o - be - dience, shone as light a - midst the gloom.
hum - bly yield - ed on the cross his dy - ing breath.
world's re - demp - tion, for your bur - den makes us free.
in the high - est while the time - less a - ges run.

Text: Venantius Fortunatus, c. 530–609, abr.; (st. 1): tr. Michael D. Schultz, b. 1963; (sts. 2–5): tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Tune: Carl F. Schalk, 1929–2021

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Stand

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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.

Lord, Have Mercy

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.

The Word

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Eternal God and Father, help us to remember Jesus, who obeyed your will and bore the cross for our salvation, that through his anguish, pain, and death we may receive the forgiveness of sins, victory over the grave, and finally inherit eternal life; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Isaiah 43:1–7

^{43:1} But now this is what the LORD says, the LORD who created you, O Jacob, the LORD who formed you, O Israel. Do not be afraid, because I have redeemed you. I have called you by name. You are mine.

² When you cross through the waters, I will be with you. When you cross the rivers, they will not sweep you away. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned, and the flame will not set you on fire.

³ Because I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior, I gave Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴ Because you are precious and honored in my eyes, and I myself love you, I will give people in exchange for you, and peoples in exchange for your life.

⁵ Do not be afraid, because I am with you. From the east I will bring your offspring, and from the west I will gather you.

⁶ I will say to the north, “Give them back!” and to the south, “Do not hold them.” Bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth—

⁷ everyone who is called by my name, everyone I created for my glory, everyone I formed, yes, everyone I have made.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

121 I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains (Choir)

Psalms 121

Refrain

I lift up my eyes to the mountains,
from where shall come my help?

My help shall come from the One who has made
the heavens and the earth,
the maker of heaven and earth.

I lift up my eyes to the / mountains—
where does my help / come from?
My help comes / from the LORD,
the maker of / heaven and earth.
He will not let your / foot slip—
he who watches over you will not / slumber;
indeed, he who watches over / Israel
will neither / slumber nor sleep. *Refrain*

The LORD watches / over you—
the LORD is your shade / at your right hand.
The LORD will keep you / from all harm—
he will watch / over your life;
the LORD will watch over your coming and / going
both now and for- / evermore.
Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain*

Choir: Prayer for Mercy

Second Reading

Hebrews 5:7–9

⁷In the days of his flesh, he offered prayers and pleas with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. ⁹After he was brought to his goal, he became the source of eternal salvation for everyone who obeys him.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

Glory, praise, and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Glory, praise, and honor to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel

John 12:20–33

²⁰ Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the Festival. ²¹ They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we want to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went to tell Andrew. Andrew came with Philip and told Jesus.

²³ Jesus answered them, “The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it continues to be one kernel. But if it dies, it produces much grain. ²⁵ Anyone who loves his life destroys it. And the one who hates his life in this world will hold on to it for eternal life. ²⁶ If anyone serves me, let him follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

²⁷ “Now my soul is troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, this is the reason I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify your name!” A voice came from heaven: “I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again.”

²⁹ The crowd standing there heard it and said it thundered. Others said an angel talked to him. ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice was not for my sake but for yours.

³¹ “Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be thrown out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate what kind of death he was going to die.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

808 Drawn to the Cross

CW 808

Children are invited to come forward during the 2nd verse for a children's message

1 Drawn to the cross, which you have blessed with heal - ing
2 How well you know my griefs and fears, your grace a -
3 Wash me and take a - way each stain; let noth - ing
4 To pledge my la - bor will - ing - ly, which shall so

gifts for souls dis - tressed, to find in you my
busied, my mis - spent years; so now to you with
of my sin re - main. For cleans - ing through your
sweet a ser - vice be that an - gels well might

life, my rest, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
con - trite tears, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
cross and pain, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.
en - vy me, Christ cru - ci - fied, I come.

Text: Genevieve M. Irons, 1855–1928, alt.
Tune: Joseph Barnby, 1838–1896
Text and tune: Public domain

God's Commitment Test

Sermon Study Guide

1. Often, we think of Christianity as our commitment to God. In reality, it is God's commitment to us. What commitment does God remind us that he has made? What does God call us?
2. God's words are not empty. He gives us evidence to back them up. What was the evidence of his commitment for Old Testament Israel and, by extension, to us?
3. The ultimate showing of God's commitment to us can be seen in his Son. How far was God willing to go to redeem us and make us his own?

Stand

Apostles' Creed

CW 163

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

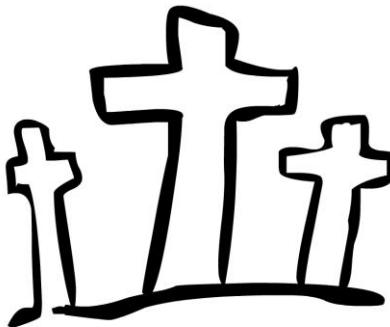
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Prayer of the Church

Offering

*Please use this opportunity to fill in the Friendship Register. Thank you
for worshipping with us today!*



813 He Will Hold Me Fast

CW 813



1 When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
 2 Those he saves are his de - light; Christ will hold me fast;
 3 For my life he bled and died; Christ will hold me fast;



when the tempt - er would pre - vail, he will hold me fast.
 pre-cious in his ho - ly sight, he will hold me fast.
 jus - tice has been sat - is - fied; he will hold me fast.



I could nev - er keep my hold thro' life's fear - ful path,
 He'll not let my soul be lost; his prom - is - es shall last;
 Raised with him to end - less life, he will hold me fast



for my love is of - ten cold— he must hold me fast.
 bought by him at such a cost, he will hold me fast.
 till our faith is turned to sight when he comes at last! (Refrain 2X)



He will hold me fast; he will hold me fast;



for my Sav-ior loves me so, he will hold me fast.

Text (sts. 1–2): Matt Merker, b. 1984, alt.; (sts. 1, Ref, 2): Ada Habershon, 1861–1918; (st. 3): Matt Merker, b. 1984

Tune: Matt Merker, b. 1984

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Stand

Blessed Lord, you have given us your holy Scriptures for our learning. May we so hear them, read, learn, and take them to heart that, being strengthened and comforted by your holy Word, we may cling to the blessed hope of everlasting life; though Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and † give you peace.

Amen.

812 Christ, the Sure and Steady Anchor

CW 812



1 Christ, the sure and stead - y an - chor in the
 2 Christ, the sure and stead - y an - chor while the
 3 Christ, the sure and stead - y an - chor through the
 4 Christ, the sure and stead - y an - chor as we



fu - ry of the storm— when the winds of doubt blow
 tem - pest ra - ges on— when temp - ta - tion claims the
 floods of un - be - lief— hope - less, some - how, O my
 face the wave of death— when these trials give way to



through me and my sails have all been torn,
 bat - tle and it seems the night has won,
 soul now, lift your eyes to Cal - va - ry.
 glo - ry and we draw our fi - nal breath,




in the suf - f'ring, in the sor - row, when my
 deep - er still then goes the an - chor, though I
 This my bal - last of as - sur - ance, see his
 we will cross that great ho - ri - zon, clouds be -
 Christ, the shore of our sal - va - tion, ev - er



sink - ing hopes are few, I will hold fast to the
 just - ly stand ac - cused; I will hold fast to the
 love for - ev - er proved; I will hold fast to the
 hind and life se - cure, and the calm will be the
 faith - ful, ev - er true— we will hold fast to the

4th stanza repeat italics



an - chor; it shall nev - er be re - moved.
 an - chor; it shall nev - er be re - moved.
 an - chor; it shall nev - er be re - moved.
 bet - ter, for the storms that we en - dure.
an - chor; it shall nev - er be re - moved.

Text: Matt Papa, b. 1983; Matt Boswell, b. 1979

Tune: Matt Papa, b. 1983; Matt Boswell, b. 1979

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