The Fifth Sunday in Lent



March 21, 2021 10:30AM

We Gather

Introduction

Celebrant:

Welcome to Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee Oklahoma. Welcome to our viewers online and to our congregation seated with proper distancing right here in the church. Wherever you are, we are glad you are with us today.

Today marks the Sunday before Palm Sunday. Lent is almost over and we join Jesus and the disciples on their journey to Jerusalem for the Passover. In John's gospel, Jesus responds to a request to see him with an enigmatic discourse on the meaning of his crucifixion and ascension. Although we could devote a college semester to his discourse in John, we will turn our attention to the more basic issue of seeing Jesus.

Opening Sentence

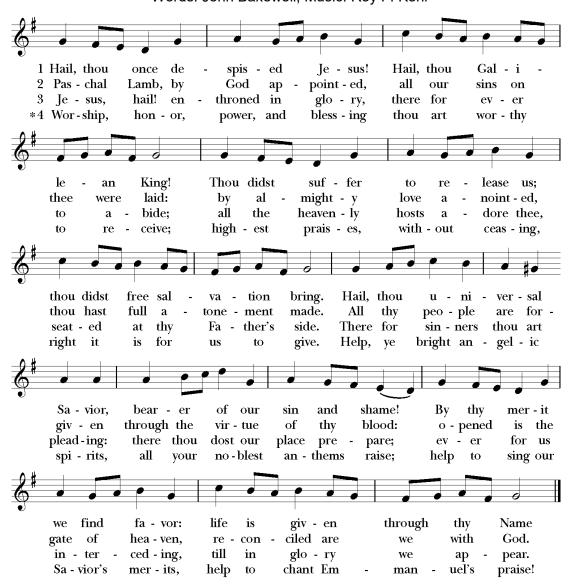
Celebrant: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 3:2

Processional Hymn: #495

Hail, Thou once despised Jesus (Vs.1,2,4)

Words: John Bakewell; Music: Roy F. Kehl



Opening Acclamation

Celebrant: Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins. People: His mercy endures for ever. Amen.

Decalogue

Celebrant: Hear the commandments of God to his people: I am the Lord your God who brought you out of

bondage. You shall have no other gods but me.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: You shall not make for yourself any idol.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: You shall not invoke with malice the Name of the Lord your God.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. Celebrant:

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: Honor your father and your mother.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy. Celebrant: You shall not commit murder. People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: You shall not commit adultery. People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

You shall not steal. Celebrant:

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: You shall not be a false witness.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

People: Amen. Lord have mercy.

Celebrant: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we

> confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8.9

Confession and Absolution

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbors. Celebrant:

Silence is observed.

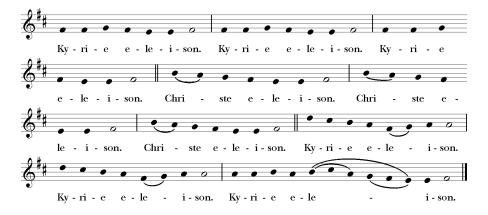
Celebrant & People: Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, Celebrant:

strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

Kyrie: #S-86



Collect of the Day

Celebrant: The Lord be with you. People: And also with you.

Celebrant: Let us pray. Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and

affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for

ever. Amen.

We Hear God's Word

First Lesson: Jeremiah 31:31-34 Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the book of Jeremiah.

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their

sin no more.

Reader: The word of the Lord. People: Thanks be to God.

Psalm 51:1-13

Reader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving-kindness; *

People: in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

Reader: Wash me through and through from my wickedness *

People: and cleanse me from my sin.

Reader: For I know my transgressions, *
People: and my sin is ever before me.

Reader: Against you only have I sinned *
People: and done what is evil in your sight.

Reader: And so you are justified when you speak *

People: and upright in your judgment.

Reader: Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth, *

People: a sinner from my mother's womb.

Reader: For behold, you look for truth deep within me, *
People: and will make me understand wisdom secretly.

Reader: Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure; * People: wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.

Reader: Make me hear of joy and gladness, *

People: that the body you have broken may rejoice.

Reader: Hide your face from my sins * and blot out all my iniquities.

Reader: Create in me a clean heart, O God, *
People: and renew a right spirit within me.

Reader: Cast me not away from your presence *
People: and take not your holy Spirit from me.

Reader: Give me the joy of your saving help again *
People: and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

Second Reading: Hebrews 5:5-10

Please remain standing as you are able.

Reader: A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

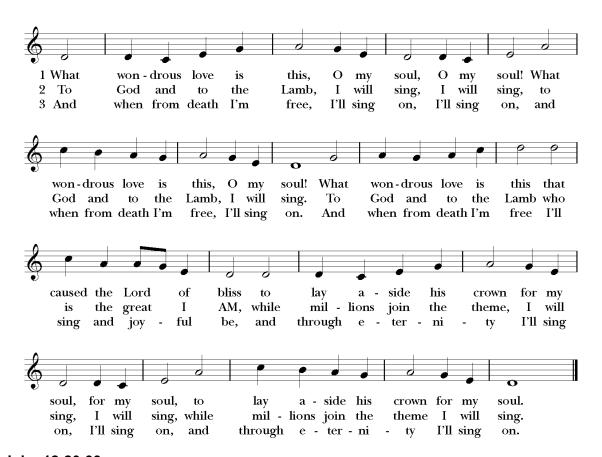
Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: #439) What wondrous love is this (Vs. 1,2,3) Please stand as you are able.



Gospel: John 12:20-33

Please Remain standing.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

"Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came

from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord. People: Glory to you, Lord Christ

Sermon: Seeing Jesus The Rev Bob Wickizer

Throughout the Roman empire, the current year was always based upon the founding of the city of Rome 750 years before the birth of Jesus. By the time of this Passover mentioned in John, the Romans would have dated it AUC 782. Jews had already been coming to Jerusalem for celebration of the Passover for over 550 years. The Romans respected the Jewish religion for its antiquity. I suspect that after five centuries of repeated rituals and pilgrimages, there were many secular Jews who just loved the great party and a time to see their friends from all over. Today, we might call them "Religious But Not Spiritual."

John's gospel refers to them as "Greeks coming to the Passover to worship." These were fully Hellenized, Greek-speaking Jews who ran successful businesses all over the empire from north Africa to Gaul (modern France) to Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Their Greek language was the language of the Empire. Their Jewish religious roots meant that they had connections everywhere. About one person in six at that time was Jewish. They were coming to the center of their religion to repeat old, familiar rituals and enjoy seeing friends and relatives. A few of them approach the one disciple of Jesus with a Greek name, Philip, who was from a Greek-named city in Galilee called "Bethsaida."

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Interestingly, the word used for "Sir" (kyrie) is also translated as "Lord" in reference to Jesus. There is a subtle clue in this double reference you will find out at the end today.

Don't we all wish to see Jesus? In May and June, I will have cataract surgery in both eyes, one at a time. I know that many people say this laser surgery is no big deal and it improves vision tremendously. I now print my sermons in large type and last week, I still got lost several times. It is dark in this pulpit and I cannot see well. We will fix both problems.

Even though the outcome statistics are very good, that doesn't completely erase my fear. Having lost and coped with one of two important sensory organs already, the very small prospects for losing even one eye terrify me.

It is not clear whether the Greek-speaking Jews who had traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover ever got their wish. In fact, Jesus goes into hiding and is next seen in public on a cross. Doubtless, they had heard about the prophet from Galilee who had raised someone from the dead who had been in a stinking tomb for four days.

Knowing that the Passover had turned into big business for the Jerusalem temple, including the people running lodging businesses for all the pilgrims, the shops selling trinkets, and the various non-Jewish religious nutcakes standing on the corner pronouncing the end of the world, I have often thought of the scene as more carnival and less solemn religious assembly.

"Sir, we wish to see Jesus" reminds me of a question we once asked after we arrived in Cayman Island. We wanted to see the limbo guy who could go under a flaming bar supported by two, two-liter soda bottles on the ground.

Jesus converts the carnival atmosphere to deeply spiritual telling them "You won't see me for a few more days. And when you do see me, you will see a tortured, flogged, and crucified man you will not even recognize. I have shown you what it means to glorify God – that you give yourselves so that others may live. I will give myself so that you may live. You will see me. I promise you."

John's gospel is all about the real presence of Christ and the power of his sacrificial love. We complete the fifty days of Easter ending with the ascension and then Pentecost with the promise that the Holy Spirit is with us and somehow, Jesus is too. Jesus gives us the grapevine and branches metaphor with the idea that we are branches on his vine. We are part of Jesus and he is part of us.

John's gospel also contains the most astonishing words from Jesus in the entire bible. He tells us that because we are part of him, we will do "greater things than" he did. Did you hear that? You will do greater things than Jesus. One more time: Christ IS in you and you will do greater things.

On the streets of modern Athens, you will hear respectful conversations. From a subordinate to his or her male boss, they will say "kyri" (sir). From a child to an adult male, they will say "kyri" (sir). The same form

was used at the time of Christ, the word was pronounced "kyrie" (sir). The same word was used to address Jesus and other adult males in this manner, "sir." It is only the English translation where a distinction was made in referring to Jesus as "Lord" instead of "sir."

I believe that Spanish has the same kind of usage where Jesus is referred to as "Señor Jesu Christo." Señor is a respectful form to address any adult male. "Señor, querríamos ver á Jesús." "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

If disaster strikes and the lights go out for me, I will be grateful but not for the disaster of loss of vision. I will be grateful because for over ten years I have been blessed to see Jesus. I have looked at you and seen Jesus, in your hearts, in your eyes, and in your actions. Look around. You'll see Jesus too.

Silence for reflection after the sermon.

Nicene Creed Please stand as you are able.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come Amen.

Prayers of the People

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Reader: Bound together in Christ in the communion of the Holy Spirit, let us pray with one heart and

mind to God our Father.

Reader: For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...

People: St. David's, Oklahoma City; St. Augustine of Canterbury, Montevideo, Uruguay; Diocese

of Idaho; The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean.

Reader: For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For...

People: Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob & Tom, our clergy; Tim & Pat,

our wardens; vestry, delegates, all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of

God. Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...

People: Joe, our President; Kamala, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James

& Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...

People: Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy,

Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Cliff, Esther, Ann, Ronald, Michael, Sheila, J.J., Marlee, Betty, Carl all those affected by the pandemic, all the front line workers involved with patient care, all first responders, law enforcement, all fire and safety personnel, all United States Military serving at home and abroad, postal workers, and those whose suffering is known only

to God.

Reader: We pray for those who have died, (especially...)

People: Lord, have mercy.

Reader: For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...

People: Jacqueline, John, Sharon, Matthew, Sarah.

Reader: Also those who are traveling, (especially....)

People: Lord, have mercy.

Reader: Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another

to the living God through Christ.

People: To you, O Lord.

Reader: Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: Accept

and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our

sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

Offertory Sentence

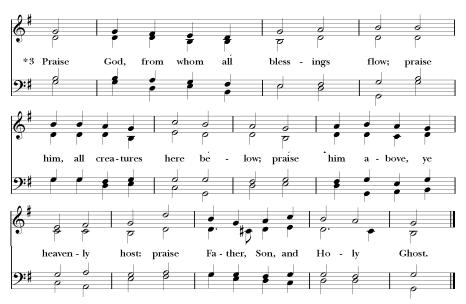
Celebrant: But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to

God. *Hebrews 13:14, 15*

Offertory Hymn: #474 When I survey the wondrous cross

Word: Isaac Watts; Music: Edward Miller





Celebrant: O gracious God

People: We offer you these gifts which you have given us; this bread and this wine. With them

we offer ourselves, our lives, and our work, to become through your Holy Spirit a

reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Eucharistic Prayer B

Sursum Corda

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds

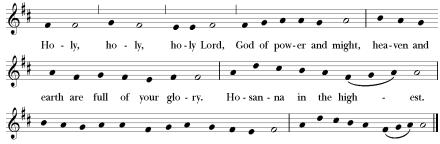
Celebrant:

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin. By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil, and to live no longer for ourselves alone, but for him who died for us and rose again.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

Sanctus: #S-124



Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high - est.

Celebrant:

We give thanks to you, O God, for the goodness and love which you have made known to us in creation; in the calling of Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus, your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Savior and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night before he died for us, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." †††

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." † † †

Therefore according to his command, O Father,

Celebrant & People: We remember his death, we proclaim his resurrection, we await his coming in glory.

And we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, O Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine. We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts that they may be the Sacrament of the Body of Christ and his Blood of the new Covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we may be acceptable through him, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In the fullness of time, put all things in subjection under your Christ, and bring us to that heavenly country where, with all your saints, we may enter the everlasting heritage of your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation.

By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. **AMEN**.

Lord's Prayer

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

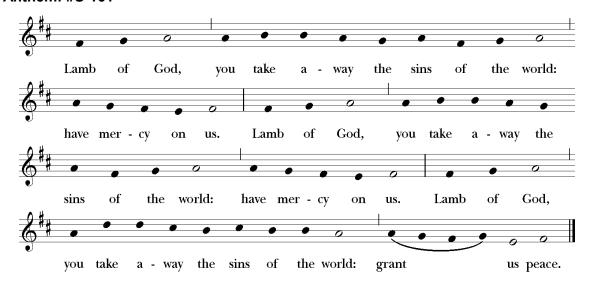
Celebrant & People:

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

A moment of silence is kept following the breaking of the bread.

Fraction Anthem: #S-161



At Grace Episcopal Church, all are welcome to receive Holy Communion.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you,

and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn: Ken Yadon

We Go Out To Do Our Work

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant & People: Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

Celebrant: May God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you

for ever. Amen.

Recessional Hymn: #473 Led on their way by this triumphant sign Please stand as you are able. Words: George William Kitchin Music: Sydney Hugo Nicholson



Dismissal

Officiant: Let us bless the Lord. People: Thanks be to God.

THOSE WHO SERVE March 21



Celebrant: The Rev Bob Wickizer

1st Reader:Jean Lewis2nd Reader:Pat WilcoxHead Usher:David WilcoxGreeter:Nancy Hurley1st Cross/Server:BJ Charbonneau2nd CrossPat Wilcox

Easter Lilies
Please remember to
order your Easter Lilies today!
Drop off at the Church office
or in the offering plate by
Monday, March 29th
to be included in the
Easter Bulletin.
Order forms enclosed



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Deacon, emeritus: The Rev. Thomas A. Harrington

Music Director: Kenneth Yadon

Youth & Children's Director: Nancy Scott