



The Vinedresser
removes the dead branches
and prunes the living ones.

REDEEMER LUTHERAN CHURCH

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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The Fourth Sunday of Lent

March 19, 2023

OUR WORSHIP

The Vinedresser

SERVICE THEME The Vinedresser does two things: [1] He removes the dead branches, and [2] He prunes the living branches.

+ Preparing to Hear God's Word +

INVOCATION

Pastor: When we are Baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit we are washed and are made perfectly clean; however, our human nature persistently seeks *saviors* other than Jesus. These saviors need to be *pruned* so that our hearts and lives focus on Jesus as our only true and ultimate Savior.

People: Amen.

OPENING HYMN *LSB 822 – "Alleluia! Let Praises Ring"*

**Alleluia! Let praises ring! To God the Father let us bring
Our songs of adoration.**

**To Him through everlasting days Be worship, honor, pow'r, and praise,
Whose hand sustains creation.**

**Sing, ringing: Holy, holy, God is holy;
Spread the story Of our God, the Lord of glory.**

**Alleluia! Let praises ring! Unto the Lamb of God we sing,
In whom we are elected.**

**He bought the Church with His own blood,
He cleansed her in that blessed flood,
And as His bride selected.**

**Holy, holy Is our union And communion.
His befriending Gives us joy and peace unending.**

**Alleluia! Let praises ring! Unto the Holy Ghost we sing
For our regeneration.**

**The saving faith in us He wrought And us unto the Bridegroom brought,
Made us His chosen nation.**

**Glory! Glory! Joy eternal, Bliss supernal;
There is manna And endless, glad hosanna.**

**Alleluia! Let praises ring! Unto our triune God we sing;
Blest be His name forever!**

**With angel hosts let us adore And sing His praises evermore
For all His grace and favor!**

**Singing, ringing: Holy, holy, God is holy;
Spread the story Of our God, the Lord of glory!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION Psalm 51:1-5, (NASB)

Pastor: Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love;

**People: According to the greatness of Your compassion,
wipe out my wrongdoings.**

Pastor: Wash me thoroughly from my guilt

People: And cleanse me from my sin.

Pastor: For I know my wrongdoings,

People: And my sin is constantly before me.

Pastor: Against You, You only, I have sinned

People: And done what is evil in Your sight,

Pastor: So that You are justified when You speak

People: And blameless when You judge.

Pastor: Behold, I was brought forth in guilt,

People: And in sin my mother conceived me.

Pastor: Let me hear joy and gladness,

People: Let the bones You have broken rejoice.

Pastor: Hide Your face from my sins

People: And wipe out all my guilt.

Pastor: I announce to you that our heavenly Father has hidden His face from our
sins on account of Jesus' suffering and death on our behalf on the cross.

And, for this same reason, He has wiped out our guilt and shame. Let us
rejoice in His love, His forgiveness, and His gift of perfect righteousness
in Christ Jesus.

SONG OF THANKSGIVING LSB 420, vv. 1 & 6 – “Christ, the Life of All the Living”

**Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death our foe,
Who, Thyself for me once giving To the darkest depths of woe:
Through Thy suff'rings death, and merit, I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

**Thou hast suffered great affliction And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion, Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented That my doom should be prevented,
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.**

PRAYER

Pastor: Gracious heavenly Father, through our abiding in Jesus' love, may Your Holy Spirit make us more loving of others. And, Father, remove from our lives our self-salvation projects, so that we trust Jesus as our only Savior. We ask in the precious name of Christ Jesus, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now, and forever.

People: Amen!

+ Hearing the Word +

OLD TESTAMENT READING Jeremiah 7:1-7 (NASB)

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ² “Stand at the gate of the LORD’S house and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the LORD!’” ³ This is what the LORD of armies, the God of Israel says: “Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you live in this place. ⁴ Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’” ⁵ For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly practice justice between a person and his neighbor, ⁶ if you do not oppress the stranger, the orphan, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, nor follow other gods to your own ruin, ⁷ then I will let you live in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.”

EPISTLE READING 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 (NIV)

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take my *thorn in the flesh* away from me. ⁹ But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Pastor: These Readings are the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL READING John 15:1-5 (NASB)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John, the evangelist, the fifteenth chapter:

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

¹ "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in Me, and I in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself but must remain in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in Me. ⁵ I am the Vine, you are the branches; the one who remains in Me, and I in him bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE *Pruning*

MESSAGE SONG *tune: Londonderry – "I Am the Vine"*

**"I am the Vine; My Father is the Gardener.
Each branch that bears no fruit, He cuts away;
While every branch that yields good fruit, He trims and cleans,
So that it will still more produce each day.
Now you are clean because of My Word's work in you.
Remain in Me, and I'll remain in you.
Just as a branch without the vine can bear no fruit,
So you must stay in Me if you would bear fruit too."**

**"I am the Vine; if you, like branches, stay in Me
And I in you, you'll bear much fruit in turn.
Apart from Me, you can accomplish naught for God;
You're like a branch that withers and is burned.
But if you stay in Me and I in you each day,
Ask what you wish; it will be given you.
God will be glorified because you bear much fruit,
For thus you show yourselves to be disciples true."**

MESSAGE *The Vinedresser*

Introduction

On March 5, we saw that branches bear fruit when attached to the Vine.
Today, we will see how the Vinedresser increases our fruitfulness.

[1] The Vinedresser removes the dead branches.

Is our relationship with Jesus producing fruit or not?

[2] The Vinedresser is pruning the live branches.

In the Greek, the word *prune* (v. 2) and the word *clean* (v. 3) are identical.

Conclusion

Living branches bear fruit and bear more fruit when pruned.

+ Response +

APOSTLES' CREED

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

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

OFFERTORY *LSB 704 – "Renew Me, O Eternal Light"*

**Renew me, O eternal Light, And let my heart and soul be bright,
Illumined with the light of grace That issues from Your holy face.**

**Remove the pow'r of sin from me And cleanse all my impurity
That I may have the strength and will Temptations of the flesh to still.**

Create in me a new heart, Lord, That gladly I obey Your Word.

Let what You will be my desire, And with new life my soul inspire.

Grant that I only You may love And seek those things which are above

Till I behold You face to face, O Light Eternal, through Your grace.

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PRAYER & 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!

+ Feasting on the Bread of Life – the Visible Word +

THE PREFACE

Pastor: For those who are sensible of their weakness, desire to be rid of it and long for help, they should regard and use this Supper as a precious antidote against the poison which they have in them. For here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sin, which contains and brings with it the grace of God and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.

[Luther's *Large Catechism*]

JESUS' WORDS

THE LAMB OF GOD *LSB 570, vv. 1-5 – "Just as I Am, without One Plea"*

Just as I am, without one plea But that thy blood was shed for me
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind; Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive, Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

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DISTRIBUTION *LSB 732/730*

COMMUNION BLESSING & POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Pastor: We give thanks to You, Father, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that in Your mercy You would strengthen us in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen!

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord is blessing you and He is keeping you;
The Lord's face is shine on you and He is being gracious to you;
The Lord is smiling the biggest smile when He thinks of you,
and He is giving you peace.

People: Amen!

SENDING HYMN *LSB 725 – "Children of the Heavenly Father"*

**Children of the heav'nly Father
Safely in His bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven
Such a refuge e'er was given.**

**God His own doth tend and nourish;
In His holy courts they flourish.
From all evil things He spares them;
In His mighty arms He bears them.**

**Neither life nor death shall ever
From the Lord His children sever;
Unto them His grace He showeth,
And their sorrows all He knoweth.**

**Though He giveth or He taketh,
God His children ne'er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely**

To preserve them pure and holy.

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