

Confession and Absolution

664 Fight the Good Fight

- 1 Fight the good fight with all your might;
Christ is your strength, and Christ your right.
Lay hold on life, and it shall be
Your joy and crown eternally.
- 2 Run the straight race through God's good grace;
Lift up your eyes, and seek His face.
Life with its way before us lies;
Christ is the path, and Christ the prize.
- 3 Cast care aside, lean on your guide;
His boundless mercy will provide.
Trust, and enduring faith shall prove
Christ is your life and Christ your love.
- 4 Faint not nor fear, His arms are near;
He changes not who holds you dear;
Only believe, and you will see
That Christ is all eternally.

Text: John S. B. Monsell, 1811-75, alt.

Text: Public domain

Stand

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Exhortation

203

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

P Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, and call upon Him in prayer and praise, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

Kneel/Stand

Confession of Sins

LSB 203

C Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Absolution

LSB 203

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Stand

Service of the Word

Introit*Psalm 100; antiphon: Psalm 101:1***P** I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.**C** **Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!****P** Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**C** **Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!****P** For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.**C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.****P** I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.**Kyrie***LSB 204***C** Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**Gloria in Excelsis***LSB 204***C** **1 To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;
Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.****2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—****3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
"Amen!" our glad reply.**

Text: Stephen P. Starke

Salutation and Collect of the Day**P** The Lord be with you.**C** **And also with you.****P** Let us pray.

O King of glory, Lord of hosts, uplifted in triumph far above all heavens, leave us not without consolation but send us the Spirit of truth whom You promised from the Father; for You live and reign with Him and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

*Sit***First Reading***Acts 1:12–26*

¹²Then [the apostles] returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶“Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸(Now this man bought a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰“For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;

and

“Let another take his office.’

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle*1 Peter 4:12–19; 5:6–11*

¹²Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸And

“If the righteous is scarcely saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?”

¹⁹Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good. . . .

⁶Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. ⁸Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. ¹⁰And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Stand

Alleluia and Verse

Alleluia

LSB 205

C Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Verse

LSB 205

C These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia

LSB 205

C Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

John 17:1–11

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventeenth chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

⁶“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. ⁸For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

C 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.

Sit

728 How Firm a Foundation

- 1 How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?
- 2 “Fear not! I am with you, O be not dismayed,
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.
- 3 “The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never, forsake!
- 4 “When through fiery trials your pathway will lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, will be your supply.
The flames will not hurt you; I only design
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.
- 5 “Throughout all their lifetime My people will prove
My sov’ reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when gray hairs will their temples adorn,
Like lambs they will still in My bosom be borne.”

Text: A Selection of Hymns, 1787, London, alt.

Text: Public domain

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God Our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

He is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Today brings both the season of Easter and our continuing reading of 1 Peter to an end. Peter encourages Christians, especially those undergoing persecution, to remain steadfast in their faith, focused on Christ crucified and the gift of eternal life. While the circumstances differ between today and the early church, this encouragement is valid and worthwhile.

The early church certainly had reasons to be anxious. As we heard two Sundays ago, Stephen was martyred for his faith by the same Sanhedrin that had Jesus crucified, opening the door for hatred and persecution which drove many Christians from Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria. King Herod Agrippa I casually had James beheaded to appease the Jews. Throughout Acts, Paul faced opposition from the Jews during his missionary journeys. Rome ignored Christianity until 64 AD when Nero blamed the Christians for the burning of Rome, sparking a wave of persecution including crucifixion and being coated with pitch and set afire to burn like torches in the night. Various emperors would ramp up the persecution of Christians, sometimes for simply bearing the title Christian.

Even beyond the fear of the Romans, the realities of life were quite different. Attaining age 5 or even age 2 was an accomplishment. Reaching ones 70s or 80s was quite rare. Keep in mind, a simple scratch could lead to an infection that could kill before nightfall. Not to mention diseases that ran rampant through communities. Or contaminated water. Or a whole range of accidents that could cause one’s death.

Many of the diseases and causes of infection, sickness and death have been addressed. Infant mortality rates are miniscule compared to Biblical times. With antibiotics and modern medicine, scratches are rarely fatal. Yet we still struggle with being anxious, with anxiety. According to the National Institute on Mental Health, (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/any-anxiety-disorder>), 19.1% or about 1 in 5 American Adults suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. 23.4% of women suffer from some form of anxiety disorder. According to HealthyChildren.org, one in three adolescents 13-18 will experience an anxiety disorder. Factors cited are a culture of achievement, a world that feels scary and threatening, and constant connection to social media, connecting one’s self-esteem and worldview to social media interactions. Anxiety disorders have one

thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening. Even if your anxiousness doesn't reach the level of anxiety disorder, odds are, you are anxious about something.

What makes you anxious? Are there situations in your life that lead you worry and be anxious? Is the current wave of inflation eating away at your savings, endangering your financial security? Did the last trip to the doctor cause you to worry or be anxious? Perhaps a diagnosis of cancer, or diabetes, or heart disease? Or does one or more relationship cause you to be anxious? Are you worried that one or more of your children might return home? Or do you not seem as sharp or as flexible as you once were? Or does something else keep you up at night?

Let's face it. Anxiousness leads to more anxiousness. Anxiety is a downward spiral, beginning with something small that continues to build. Being anxious about one thing leads to being anxious about another which leads to being anxious about yet another. There is, however, a solution, as Peter proclaims in 1 Peter 5:7 ⁷“casting all your anxieties on him [God] , because he [God] cares for you.”

From before God created, God had a plan for you, as Jeremiah writes (29:11) ¹¹“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare^[a] and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” And as God speaks to Joshua (1:9) ⁹“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” Further, doesn't the Bible reveal God's care for His people and God's caring for you by sending Jesus to be your savior?

But our sinful nature wants to be in charge. Our sinful nature wants to be god. We want to do it ourselves. We want to solve our own problems in our own way. Never mind that our ways fail. Never mind that we too often hear Satan's voice leading us away from God. Never mind that world leads us astray. Rather than trusting God to care for us, we want to care for ourselves. Rather than having God's perfect plan, we prefer to strike out on our own, to try to take care of things ourselves, to be the master of our own destiny.

But God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life (John 3:16). God sent Jesus to die for your sins and the sins of the whole world. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:21 ²¹“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Jesus took your sin and gives you His righteousness. Jesus died the death that you should die so that you don't have to die eternally.

God designed the whole world and knows its workings better than you or I ever will. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 ²⁷“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹so that no human being^[d] might boast in the presence of God.”

Your righteousness with God is a gift of God, purely and simply. You can do nothing to improve your relationship with God. And as much as this goes against the grain of mankind, you are completely passive. You can merely receive God's grace and mercy. You can't seek it. You can't earn it. God's grace and mercy is a purely undeserved gift of God who cares for you.

God's grace and mercy demand a response. God's grace and mercy lead you to live as God's child, in a loving relationship with Him. God provides all that you need for this life and for all eternity. And so, turn to God in every need, pray, praise, and give thanks. Turn to him with your anxiousness, cares and concerns. Give those to God knowing that He loves you and provides for your every need. As you will hear next Sunday, on Pentecost, God sent the Holy Spirit to work faith in your heart and call you to the waters of Baptism where you became His own dear child. The Holy Spirit calls you to repent and confess when you sin. The Holy Spirit forgives your sin and will on the last day bring you to life in the new heavens and the new earth to reign with Jesus for all eternity. The Holy Spirit leads you to confess Jesus as Lord before your friends, neighbors, and acquaintances. The Holy Spirit cries out on your behalf when you don't know what to pray for.

And so, trust God knowing that He will provide all your needs. Take your anxieties to the Lord in prayer, knowing that he cares for you. Knowing that He loves you so much that He died for you. Knowing that He wants you to be with Him for all eternity. Amen.

And now, may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

Stand

Prayer of the Church

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church of God, that she would be protected from every attack of the prowling lion, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For protection against Satan's seductions and terrors, that no false doctrine or ungodly living would gain a foothold among us, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For endurance and patience, that where the devil incites enemies against God's Word and Church, the saints may rejoice to share in Christ's sufferings, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the work of our missionaries, that the seeds they sow would bring forth the harvest of our Lord Jesus; that they would endure fiery trials for Christ's name; that they would shine the light of His Gospel into the hostile darkness; and that they would rejoice in tribulation to share the sufferings of the Lord who suffered for us all, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our nation and all people of the world, that peace and justice would overcome war and violence, liberty reign over oppression, and that the holy angels would guard those who defend us in the armed forces or protect us in our communities, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick and the distressed, those whose hearts are heavy, those whose lives are burdened, those who mourn, and all who are in need [*especially _____*]; and that they would be granted healing and given God's peace which passes all understanding, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Heavenly Father, as the first Christians devoted themselves to prayer and worship following Christ's glorious ascension, preserve us in the same until we are raised with all the saints to Your heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

C 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.**

Post-Communion Collect

A Let us pray.

Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom that comes down from above, that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, so that in steadfast faith we may serve You and, in the confession of Your name, abide unto the end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Benedicamus*LSB 212***A** Let us bless the Lord.**C** Thanks be to God.**Benediction**

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C Amen.**730 What Is the World to Me**

- 1 What is the world to me
 With all its vaunted pleasure
 When You, and You alone,
 Lord Jesus, are my treasure!
 You only, dearest Lord,
 My soul's delight shall be;
 You are my peace, my rest.
 What is the world to me!
- 2 The world seeks to be praised
 And honored by the mighty
 Yet never once reflects
 That they are frail and flighty.
 But what I truly prize
 Above all things is He,
 My Jesus, He alone.
 What is the world to me!
- 3 The world seeks after wealth
 And all that mammon offers
 Yet never is content
 Though gold should fill its coffers.
 I have a higher good,
 Content with it I'll be:
 My Jesus is my wealth.
 What is the world to me!
- 4 What is the world to me!
 My Jesus is my treasure,
 My life, my health, my wealth,
 My friend, my love, my pleasure,
 My joy, my crown, my all,
 My bliss eternally.
 Once more, then, I declare:
 What is the world to me!

Text: Georg Michael Pfefferkorn, 1645–1732; tr. August Crull, 1845–1923, alt.

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