

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

March 13 and 14, 2021

5 p.m. Saturday, 8 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday



FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

The God Who Changes Us

AS WE GATHER *(Based on Ephesians 5:1-20)*

You've heard the saying, "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery?" Well, the passage on which the Pastor is preaching today says, "**Imitation is the sincerest form of godliness.**" God loves us just as we are but He also loves us too much to stay AS we are. He is in the CHANGE business. And it's a good change, just like the old joke that the only person who really likes change is a baby with a dirty diaper. Like babies, we have soiled ourselves with various sins and need a change. Some of the ones mentioned in our lesson are impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk, greediness, getting drunk and coarse joking. We've all soiled ourselves with many kinds of impurities and it is GOOD that God wants to give us a CHANGE!

God also gives us the "how." It is as simple as imitation. "**Imitate God,**" Paul **urges.** Some of the things he mentions include "understand what the Lord's will is" and "make the most of every opportunity" to let people know about Jesus. A whole bunch of Paul's imitation list relates to **singing and listening to godly music.** He says to listen to it, sing it, say the words, use it to give thanks and make music in your heart (verses 19-20). Paul calls this "being filled with the Spirit" (verse 18).

Do you know what 91.1 stands for? If not, WHY NOT!?!?? It is the Christian radio station in Denver called K-Love. This national Christian music program on radio plays healthy, godly Christian music 24/7 on FM 91.7 on your radio dial that helps you to think about, give thanks to and imitate God. There are also prayers, inspirational messages and information on Christian growth. I (Michael Zehnder) think if Paul were writing Ephesians today he would add to Ephesians 5, "**And for heaven's sake, make sure you sometimes listen to K-Love on your radio dial and sing along with it!**" Many, many people have found that listening to Christian music on the radio (or through an app) changes the mood and atmosphere of the entire house, your car, your daily walk, your office or wherever you are. "Be careful then, how you live - not as unwise, but as wise."



AWAKE

O sleeper, and

ARISE

*from the dead,
and Christ will*

SHINE

on you.

Ephesians 5:14, ESV

✂ PREPARATION ✂

Prelude

“Now Thank We All Our God”

J.S. Bach

Pastoral Greeting

Opening Hymn

“Now Thank We All Our God”

LSB 895



1 Now thank we all our God With hearts and hands and voic - es,
2 Oh, may this boun-teous God Through all our life be near us,
3 All praise and thanks to God The Fa - ther now be giv - en,



Who won-drous things has done, In whom His world re - joic - es;
With ev - er joy - ful hearts And bless - ed peace to cheer us
The Son, and Him who reigns With them in high - est heav - en,



Who from our moth - ers' arms Has blest us on our way
And keep us in His grace And guide us when per - plexed
The one e - ter - nal God, Whom earth and heav'n a - dore;



With count - less gifts of love And still is ours to - day.
And free us from all ills In this world and the next!
For thus it was, is now, And shall be ev - er - more.

Public domain

Invocation

Opening Sentences

Numbers 21:9; Ephesians 2:4–5; John 3:16

Pastor: Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone,

People: he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Pastor: But God, . . . even when we were dead in our trespasses,

People: made us alive together with Christ.

Pastor: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,

People: that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Confession of Sins

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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 justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Absolution

✠ WORD ✠

Kyrie

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who saved us while we were still sinners,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, once lifted upon the tree of the cross,

People: have mercy on us.

Pastor: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

People: have mercy on us and grant us Your peace. Amen.

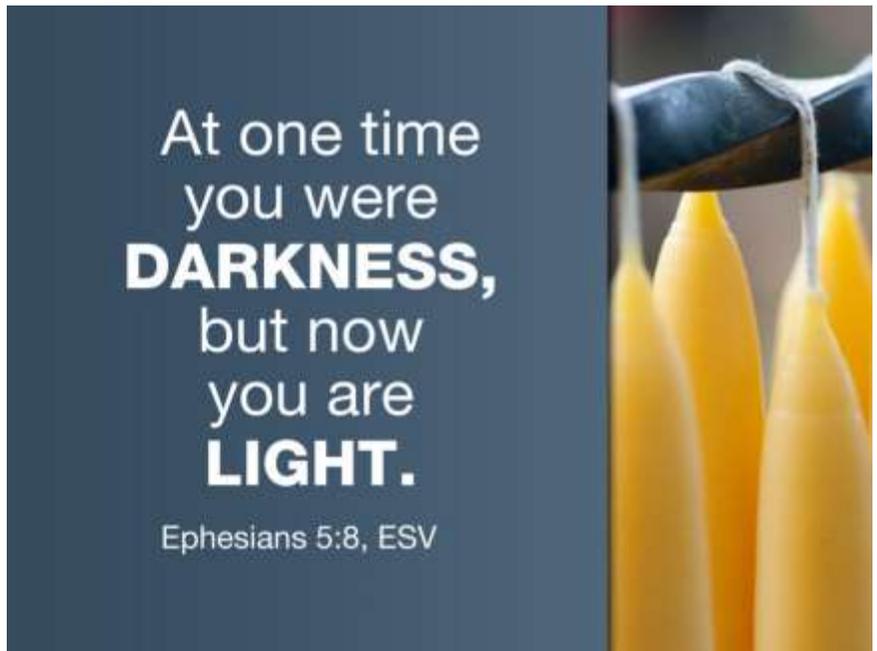
Epistle: Ephesians 5:1-20

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: "Wake up sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Verse *Joel 2:13b*

Pastor: Return to the LORD, your God,

People: **for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.**

Holy Gospel: John 3:14-21

(All who look up to Jesus on the cross will be saved.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to John, the 3rd Chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**



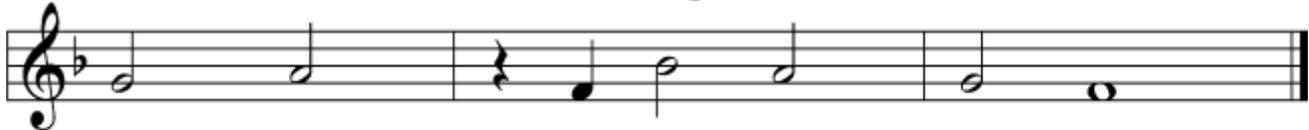
1 Rise, shine, you peo - ple! Christ the Lord has en - tered
 2 See how He sends the pow'rs of e - vil reel - ing;
 3 Come, cel - e - brate, your ban - ners high un - furl - ing,



Our hu - man sto - ry; God in Him is cen - tered.
 He brings us free - dom, light and life and heal - ing.
 Your songs and prayers a - gainst the dark-ness hurl - ing.



He comes to us, by death and sin sur -
 All men and wom - en, who by guilt are
 To all the world go out and tell the



round - ed, With grace un - bound - ed.
 driv - en, Now are for - giv - en.
 sto - ry Of Je - sus' glo - ry.

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Sermon "The God Who Changes Us"

Pastor John Larson
 TEXT: Ephesians 5:1-20

Apostles' Creed

People: 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.

Prayer of the Church

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy...

People: Hear our prayer.

Offering Offerings will be collected at the back, in the Narthex.

✠ HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION ✠

The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with "Amen!", a word of affirmation and belief.

THE LORD'S SUPPER



✠ SACRAMENT ✠

Preface (Divine Service, Setting One)

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

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

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

Words of Institution



Lord's Prayer

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 forever and ever. Amen.

Agnus Dei Genesis 22:8; John 1:29; Revelation 7:17

Pastor: Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb."

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

People: Christ, have mercy.

Pastor: John saw "the Lamb in the midst of the throne."

People: Lord, have mercy and grant us Your peace. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

"Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing"

LSB 691



1 Fruit - ful trees, the Spir - it's sow - ing, May we rip - en
2 Lad - en branch - es free - ly bear - ing Gifts the Giv - er
3 Root - ed deep in Christ our Mas - ter, Christ our pat - tern
4 Fruit - ful trees, the Spir - it's tend - ing, May we grow till



and in - crease, Fruit to life e - ter - nal grow - ing,
loves to bless; Here is fruit that grows by shar - ing,
and our goal, Teach us, as the years fly fast - er,
har - vests cease; Till we taste, in life un - end - ing,



Rich in love and joy and peace.
Pa - tience, kind - ness, gen - tle - ness.
Good - ness, faith, and self - con - trol.
Heav - en's love and joy and peace.

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Special Music (Organ)

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Paul Manz

General Communion Blessing

Benediction (Divine Service, Setting One)

Pastor: 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.

People: **Amen.**





1 I want to walk as a child of the light.
 2 I want to see the bright-ness of God.
 3 I'm look - ing for the com - ing of Christ.



I want to fol - low Je - sus.
 I want to look at Je - sus.
 I want to be with Je - sus.



God set the stars to give light to the world.
 Clear Sun of Righ - teous - ness, shine on my path,
 When we have run with pa - tience the race,



The star of my life is Je - sus.
 And show me the way to the Fa - ther.
 We shall know the joy of Je - sus.

Refrain



In Him there is no dark - ness at all.



The night and the day are both a - like.



The Lamb is the light of the cit - y of God.



Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal Ephesians 2:10

Pastor: You are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Therefore, go in peace as you serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

Postlude "Trumpet Finale"
(and Row by Row Dismissal)

Francesco Manfredini



Serving in Worship

OFFICIANT and CELEBRANT
DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRIES

Pastor John Larson
Michael Zehnder

TRY TO
DISCERN WHAT
IS PLEASING
TO THE LORD.

EPHESIANS 5:10, ESV

