

## Sermon followed by Service

October 22, 2023

Jonah 3-4

‘Tis the season. Walk through your neighborhood at night and what do you see in the moonlight? Bones. Bones sticking up from the ground - hand bones, arm bones, leg bones, rib bones. And skulls - skulls still attached and skulls cut off. And skeletons - skeletons hanging from trees and skeletons lying around. And not just any kind of bones and skeletons and skulls - plastic bones and skeletons and skulls.

Now imagine that those bones and skeletons and skulls aren’t plastic. They’re real bones. Not butcher shop animal bones, but butchered people bones. The bones of your friends and neighbors, the bones of your parents and children. Some of them are the bones of people killed in battle; most of them are the bones of neighbors, family and friends, parents and children tortured and killed after the battle. They made you watch as they tortured and killed; they made you watch as they gouged out eyes and cut off parts. They made you watch as they skinned the dead and the alive. They made you watch as bodies were piled up and hung up on poles for all to see. They made you watch as they tortured and killed. Why? So you would never say “no” to them, so you would never argue or fight back against them again. Who were they? The Assyrians with Nineveh as their capital.

Now you are Jonah, God’s prophet in Israel. You know what the Assyrians have done to the neighboring countries, the peoples, around you. You know the violence and the cruelty of the Assyrians. And you know how the fear of the Assyrians has had your king and country paying the Assyrian king to keep the peace. It turns your stomach; and it sickens your insides to see how weak and pathetic Israel has become. You’re supposed to be God’s people, God’s country. And so you love it, you love it that God has told you, and you get to tell the world: “God will make Israel great again.”

It gets even better. God sends you to that Nineveh you hate, to preach God’s judgment against Nineveh. You get to preach against your enemy with the power and judgment of God. Sounds good, doesn’t it? Jonah didn’t think so. He hated the thought of going to Nineveh so much he took off in the opposite direction, then got in a ship to go as far away from Nineveh as possible.

Why? It wasn't fear. Jonah was a man who could sleep through a storm, in the bottom of a ship, while its sailors were terrified. Jonah was a man who could walk past piles of bones and skulls and preach judgment on those who stacked the bones. Jonah was a man who wasn't afraid to argue and complain against God. It doesn't seem to be fear that had Jonah running from God and from Nineveh. Jonah gives us a different answer. It was God's grace and mercy and patience. Jonah wanted Nineveh judged, and he didn't want to give Nineveh any chance to turn to God; he didn't want to give God any reason to show his grace and mercy to Nineveh. What did we hear? Jonah cared more about a plant giving him shade than he cared about even the "most innocent" in Nineveh. He wanted to see all of Nineveh judged and destroyed.

Where do you see you in our lesson? Ever been the bully? Pushing, terrorizing, making people miserable to get your way? At school, at work, at home. Don't be too quick to say "No."

Ever been the Jonah? Maybe you've been on the wrong side of the bully, the abuser, the harasser. Maybe at school, maybe at work, maybe at home. Or maybe you've just seen the bully in action. Either way, you want to see the bully bullied; you want to see that jerk get what's coming to them; you want to see the bully judged and crushed - no grace, no mercy.

Ever been the Jonah? God says: "Go. Go to the one who has sinned against you. Go to the one who has hurt you. Go and win him over for Jesus." Or God says: "Forgive. Forgive those who sin against you." Or God says: "Go. Go and make disciples of all nations," but those nations aren't your kind of people. Or God says: "Love. Love your neighbor as yourself," but those neighbors - you don't want to have anything to do with them or their kind. Ever been the Jonah? When God said, "Go," you turned around the other way? When God wanted to show grace and mercy, you hoped for judgment and cheered for judgment? Ever been the Jonah?

I know I've been both, both the Ninevite and the Jonah. That's why it is so good to see how God is in our lesson. He doesn't have his heart set on judging Nineveh. He wants to show grace and mercy; he gives them a chance to repent.

Some might argue, we might argue. When we're hurt or afraid because of what people have done to us, we might argue: "God's up in heaven; he doesn't know what it's like to hurt like I hurt; he doesn't know what it's like to have to deal with people like them; he doesn't know what it's like to live wondering, waiting, 'What if they do it again?' God doesn't know what he's asking of me."

But Jesus does. Jesus knows hurt and suffering. He knows unfair hurt and suffering. Jesus wasn't on the cross for what he did wrong; Jesus was on the cross to pay for what I, for what we have done wrong. Yes, Jesus knows what it's like to be called by God to go and love, to go and forgive, to go and be hated and rejected, tortured and abused, mocked and ridiculed, spit on and crucified, and through it all to love and forgive. To love and forgive, not just his family and friends, but to love and forgive the soldiers pounding the spikes into his hands and feet.

Jesus knew God's call to grace and mercy, and he answered: "Father, forgive them." Not just for them, but for you and for me. Not just because "they do not know what they are doing," but for you and for me even when we did know what we were doing. For those times we have been the Ninevites making others miserable .... For those times we have been Jonah turning away from the LORD .... For those times, with Jesus, we get to join David: "**Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against him .... I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**"

What do we do with that? We know what David did with God's grace and mercy: "**Praise the LORD, O my soul. All my inmost being praise his holy name!**" David wasn't just talking about saying nice things to God; David set his heart to sharing the grace and mercy of God with people, with sinners who needed the grace and mercy of God.

And what about Jonah? What did Jonah do with God's grace and mercy? We don't know. Unless Jonah himself wrote this little book. Then what do we have? We have old Jonah, judging Jonah in our lesson, and we have new Jonah writing our lesson, new Jonah showing us the grace and mercy in God's heart. Even if Jonah didn't write this book, what a beautiful picture of God's grace and mercy, grace and mercy we get to see for ourselves in Jesus.

So what do we do with God's grace and mercy for the Ninevite, the old Jonah, the sinner in us? What do we do with God's grace and mercy for the Ninevite, the Jonah, the sinner out there? We go. We don't turn around, hunker, and hide. We go. We love. We forgive. With the heart and grace of God, like the new Jonah, we show and tell others the heart and the grace of our God.

That's right. We have something better to share with our world than dead, dry bones. We have something better to share than Ninevite fear or Halloween fun. We have something better to share than "you better do what I want or else." We have something better to share than "a better life for me and mine." In a world full of Ninevite bullies and judging old Jonahs, we have the heart of a new Jonah, a heart filled with the grace and the mercy of God - a new Jonah with a heart ready to go with God - "Let's go and show; let's show and tell!" Amen.

October 21 & 22, 2023

NEW MORNING PRAISE

**IN OUR WORLD TODAY ...** it is easy to see people as “us” or “them.” Then what? It’s easy to be for us and against them, or if not against them, not concerned for them.

**IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ...** we see a God with a love, not just for those like him, but for those against him. We see a God with a love, not just for us, but a love for them. And we see a God who wants to share his love for them through us!

OPENING HYMN

*“O Christians, Haste”*  
Hymn 901

O Christians, haste, your mission high fulfilling,  
to tell to all the world that God is light,  
that he who made all nations is not willing  
one soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

*Refrain*

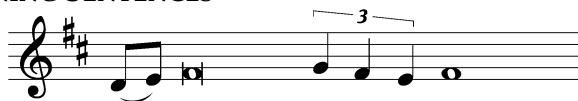
Publish glad tidings, tidings of peace,  
tidings of Jesus, redemption and release.

Behold how many thousands still are lying  
bound in the dreary prison-house of sin  
with none to tell them of the Savior’s dying  
or of the life he died for them to win. *Refrain*

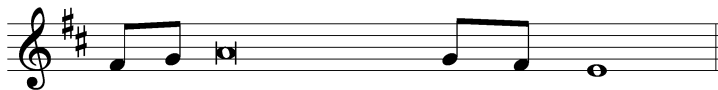
Proclaim to ev’ry people, tongue, and nation  
that God, in whom they live and move, is love;  
tell how he stooped to save his lost creation  
and died on earth that they might live above. *Refrain*

Send heralds forth to bear the message glorious,  
give of your wealth to speed them on their way;  
pour out your soul for them in prayer victorious;  
O Christians, haste to bring the brighter day! *Refrain*

## OPENING SENTENCES



O Lord, o - pen my lips.



**And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.**



Hasten to save me, O God.



**O Lord, come quickly to help me.**

## CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

**C: Amen.**



Give glory to God, our light and our life.



Come, O come, let us wor - ship.

### COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD



Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,



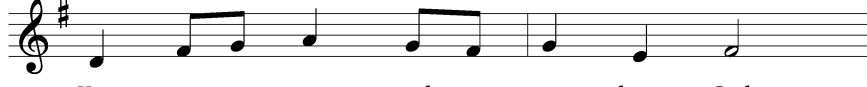
let us shout with joy to our sav - ing Rock;



come, en - ter in with our songs of praise,



come, en - ter in with thanks - giv - ing.



1 You are a great and a won - drous God,  
2 Come, let us wor - ship and, bow - ing low,



cup - ping in your hands all the depths of earth.  
kneel be - fore the One who has made us all.



You made the hills and the moun - tains high,  
You are the God whom we call our own,

*Refrain*



you made the seas and the dry land.  
we are the flock that you shep - herd.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, keep us ever mindful of the fields ripe for harvest here and throughout the world. Give our members a deep passion for the welfare of others and great courage to witness your lifesaving truth to friends, family members, and coworkers. Establish gospel outreach as an immovable pillar of our congregation's ministry. Make us eager to invest our talents and offerings in evangelism efforts so that many more may be won for your kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of all people. **Amen.**

## SCHOOL CHILDREN SING – GRADES 3-8 (SUNDAY)

*"We Are Singing"*  
CWS Hymn 732

### *Refrain*

*We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing, for the Lord is our light.  
We are singing, for the Lord is our light, we are singing, for the Lord is our light.  
We are singing, Oh, we are singing, for the Lord is our light,  
We are singing, Oh, we are singing, for the Lord is our light.*

*The Lord is the strength of our lives; Of whom shall we be afraid?  
Though foes may be near to destroy; The Lord will be our light. **Refrain***

*One thing have we asked of the Lord, Yes, this is the thing we seek:  
To dwell in the house of the Lord, To live with God forever. **Refrain***

*When burdens are heavy to bear, Our shelter is God alone.  
Our feet are lifted high, Yes high upon a rock. **Refrain***

*We walk in the strength of the Lord; God's love is ever sure.  
We shout that the world may hear; We sing a joyful song. **Refrain***

## FIRST READING

*Jonah 3*

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh.



Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM OF THE DAY

*Psalm 98E*



1 Sing a new song to the LORD, he to whom won-ders be-  
 2 Now to the ends of the earth, see, his sal - va - tion is  
 3 Sing a new song and re - joice! Pub - lish his prais - es a -  
 4 Join with the hills and the sea thun - ders of praise to pro-



long! Re - joice in his tri - umph and tell of his  
 shown, and still he re - mem - bers his mer - cy and  
 broad! Let voi - ces in cho - rus, with trum - pet and  
 long! In judg - ment and jus - tice he comes to the



pow'r! O sing to the LORD a new song!  
 truth, un - chang - ing in love to his own.  
 horn, re - sound for the joy of the LORD!  
 earth. O sing to the LORD a new song!

## SECOND READING

*Jonah 4*

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Freely you have received, freely give. Alleluia!

## GOSPEL

*Matthew 20:1-16*

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

“About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went.

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing.

About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

“ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

“When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

“But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

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

#### **APOSTLES’ CREED**

**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.

HYMN

*"We Are Called to Stand Together"*

Hymn 903

We are called to stand together with the saints of ages past,  
with the patriarchs and prophets in the faith they once held fast;  
promises and hopes they treasured now we find fulfilled at last!

Those whom Jesus called apostles journeyed with him side by side,  
heard his teaching, felt his power, saw the way he lived and died;  
then the news of resurrection they delivered far and wide.

Thro' the intervening ages round the world the gospel spread:  
faithful heralds took the message, guided where the Spirit led;  
so the body grew in stature, serving Christ, the living head.

Now in many tongues and cultures songs of celebration ring;  
millions who confess our Savior honor him as Lord and King  
and, for courage, grace, and guidance, ev'ry day their prayers they bring.

To each coming generation tell the truth, persuade, explain,  
till the time when time is ended, till the Savior comes again—  
till the saints are all united under Christ's eternal reign!

SERMON

## HYMN

## *"I Love to Tell the Story"*

Hymn 746

I love to tell the story of unseen things above, of Jesus and his glory,  
of Jesus and his love. I love to tell the story because I know it's true;  
it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.

I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory  
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.  
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,  
'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.  
I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory  
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Father in heaven, you sent your Son, our Lord Jesus, to bring peace and hope to our fallen world. Already in eternity you planned to overturn the tyranny of Satan and the ravages of sin and you kept your promises to restore the perfection of paradise.

**Lead us to cherish your great mercy and hold to it as our priceless treasure.**

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, we praise and adore you for offering your perfect life and innocent death to redeem the world from death and hell. You proclaimed the good news that sins are forgiven and life with God is restored and you called your followers to share the gospel with all people.

**Make us bold and confident to be witnesses to family and friends we know and love.**

Holy Spirit, Lord, and giver of life, through Word and sacrament you create and strengthen faith that trusts the promise of the Father and the work of his Son. You break down the barriers of resistance and rejection and bring the lost into the family of God.

**Empower and encourage us to speak about Jesus to neighbors and acquaintances.**

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

*Silent prayer*

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, move us by your great love to enter the mission fields near our homes and neighborhoods. Help us always to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have.

**Guide us, strengthen us, and bless us as we share the love of Jesus. Amen.**

### PRAYER AND 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.**

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

### BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.



**A - men.**



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

## CHOIR

## *"On Jordan's Stormy Banks"*

*On Jordan's stormy banks I stand, And cast a wishful eye  
To Canaan's fair and happy land, Where my possessions lie.*

*All o'er those wide extended plains, Shines one eternal day;  
There God the Son forever reigns, And scatters night away.*

### **Refrain**

*I am bound (I am bound) I am bound (I am bound)  
I am bound for promised land, I am bound (I am bound)  
I am bound (I am bound) I am bound for promised land.*

*No chilling winds nor poisonous breath Can reach that healthful shore;  
Sickness, sorrow, pain and death, Are felt and feared no more. **Refrain***

*When shall I reach that happy place, And be forever blessed?  
When shall I see my Father's face, And in His bosom rest? **Refrain***

**OFFERING**

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code with your mobile device.*



*(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)*

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**LEARN TO TELL OTHERS  
ABOUT JESUS**

God’s people want to tell others about the peace, joy, and forgiveness they have in Jesus. But many Christians are unsure how to do this. Join us as we learn to reach out to the lost souls God has brought into our lives.

**Where:** St. John Fellowship Hall

**When:** During Family Bible Hour, Starting October 22



**St. John**

Evangelical Lutheran Church & School



## Flowers for the Lord

When we give flowers to family or friends we're saying: "I love you; I thank you; I appreciate you; you're special; I want to cheer you ...." So what are we saying when we donate flowers for the altar? "Look at the beauty in creation that God has given us! All good things come from God! We love you! We thank you! We want people to see you and your house as special!"

Our sign-up list for altar flowers is in the northeast entry of the church. The cost for the two flower arrangements is now \$20 a week, \$10 for each arrangement. Many weekends, people share the privilege of providing the flowers. Our sign-up lines are now divided to more clearly show this option. After the service, flowers may be donated to share with the home-bound or taken home. Cash or checks written to Flowerama may be given to Kim L'Esperance or put in her mailbox in the office.

If you have questions, please contact Kim at [kimthecheflesperance@aol.com](mailto:kimthecheflesperance@aol.com) or 847-271-2847.

And if you would like to be on our flower delivery team, please let Kim know.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtfulness!



## **End of Summer Project List**

Please feel free to recruit some help and take on a project - on your schedule or on ours!  
If you have questions, we have some contact names below, or ask Pastor.

### **Outside Projects - Contact Todd Haefke**

- Lawn tractor repair
- Snow Tractor removal - clear the shed for bench storage
- Lawn Tractor removal - make space for chipper and/or bench storage
- Flowerbed care / weeding
- Pruning / Trimming
- Sign-Post Driving for Parking Lot
- Preschool Playground - rake mulch from high spots to low spots

### **Air Quality**

- Clean classroom and office air filter machines and replace filters

### **Fixings**

- Belt Replacement? in office folding machine
- Mortar (inside) around new church basement windows
- Weatherstripping - west entry
- Cable Management Covers/Casing - throughout school building
- Gas Grill (north landing (between church and school) - evaluate and ???
- Door Stop - Men's Fellowship Hall Restroom

### **Ladder Work - Contact Pastor**

- Number Our Windows - Safety # Decals for Classroom Windows
- Church/School Entry lights (scaffolding needed)
- Lights (ballast replacement?) - bottom of church entry steps
  - bottom of church/school entry steps

### **Muscle Moving**

- GaGa Pit Base - Contact Jonas Penalzoa

### **Painting - Contact Pastor or Sheryl**

#### **Paint (Touch Up)**

White - Church School Entry - under steps and landing

Railings - west entry upper

West Entry Wall - lower south and AC pipes

Classroom Blue - take a tour

Touch-up paint by display window in 7&8 room

School entrance railing touch-up paint

School entrance brick touch-up paint

Lower hallway tablet holder (remove?)