

Lessons for The Second Sunday in Lent

February 25, 2024

Psalm 22:23–31 – *A plea for and anticipation of praise from all the earth for God's sure deliverance.*

Genesis 17:1–7, 15–16 – *God promised Abraham and Sarah their descendants would become nations.*

Romans 5:1–11 – *God made peace with us through the cross of Christ, even when we were enemies.*

Mark 8:27–38 – *Jesus embraced the cross to restore us to God; now it has become our way of Life, too.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: People of the Cross

As God's people, marked by the cross of Christ in Baptism, we know and share the good news that even while we were still enemies of God, Jesus gave His life to reconcile us to God. We take up our cross and follow our Savior when we live by that Gospel, reaching out to heal broken relationships in spite of suffering deprivation or ridicule because of it. We are people of the cross and children of Abraham because God has called us to trust His promise and live by His covenant.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Gracious God, You love me, not for what I was, but for who I might become when touched by Your grace in Christ Jesus. Grant me perseverance, character, and hope so that I may endure suffering for the sake of Your redeeming power. Finally, let me know the glories of heaven when Christ returns with the holy angels. Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: How we use the gifts and opportunities God has entrusted to us will reveal whether we live as His friends or His enemies and tempters.

OFFERING PRAYER: Lord, You have made us Your dear friends
Through the cross of Christ our Savior.
Bless these gifts for Your kingdom's ends;
May they be used to show Your favor. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: It is not just Jesus' identity, but also his mission that impacts our lives. With Peter we can identify Jesus as the Christ of God, and often, with Peter, would deny him the cross by which the messianic work has been accomplished. Because we were enemies of God, we must have Christ's work on the cross to reconcile us to God. Embraced by the cross of Christ, we are enlisted in his mission. We live by his covenant of grace as children of Abraham and take up our cross of suffering for the Gospel as we live in service to his message of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions to Consider: How good are you at following the cross-roads in your life?

- Why can we claim to be children of Abraham and Sarah?
- How did God change us from his enemies to his children?
- What is it about the cross that represents "the things of God?"
- How is the cross more than a symbol in our lives?