



**OUR
GREATEST
NEEDS**

A Gift for the World

The Second Sunday in Lent

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | Seward, Nebraska

March 5, 2023

SERIES THEME: OUR GREATEST NEEDS

What do you really need right now? To answer that question, one must first define what a “need” is. We understand that a “need” is greater than a “want.” If you lack something you want, life goes on just fine. If you lack something you need, that presents a problem. Thus, to correctly answer that question, “What do you really need right now,” ultimately one must understand their greatest problems. Mankind’s greatest problems are universal. We all live under the curse of sin. That sin makes us utterly helpless in our natural state. Natural man is confused, unable to make sense of life. Left in sin, man is doomed to death, and not just physical death. After one’s heart stops comes another type of death that is infinitely worse, an eternal nightmare. Lent is the season of the Church Year where we wrestle with our greatest needs. Lent also demonstrates that in Christ, all our greatest needs are met. Here is what the Spirit makes clear this season. If you lack Christ, you have nothing. If you have Christ, you have everything you truly need.

THEME OF THE DAY: A GIFT FOR THE WORLD

When assessing the seriousness of need, one factor is how widespread that need is. A homeless individual needs food. During a famine, an entire nation needs food. It is substantially easier to meet the needs of the former than the latter! The more widespread a need, the greater the need. When Jesus said, “No one can enter the kingdom of God,” he declared that the need for salvation is universal. He rightly condemned humanity as a whole. There is no one on the face of the earth who can make the case that they deserve God’s blessing. Yet, ages ago, God declared that all nations would be blessed. God has declared his love for the world and promised he would save the world. God’s gift of salvation is meant for all people. Some interpret this to mean that all people will be saved in the end. This is not true. The gift of salvation is meant for the world; however, it is received by faith. “Whoever believes in him...” the Gospel says. However, the good news is that faith is also God’s gift, imparted through that gospel.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Karma Ridpath

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 613 The God of Abraham Praise

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Almighty God, you see that we have no power to defend ourselves. Guard and keep us both outwardly and inwardly from all adversities that may happen to the body and all evil thoughts that may assault and hurt the soul; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Genesis 12:1–8

The Lord promised Abram that one of his descendants would be a gift for the world. The Lord also gave Abram the gift of faith to believe that promise.

The Call of Abram

¹ Now the Lord said to Abram, “Get out of your country and away from your relatives and from your father’s house and go to the land that I will show you. ² I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great. You will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse anyone who dishonors you. All of the families of the earth will be blessed in you.”

⁴ So Abram went, as the Lord had told him. Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother’s son, and all the possessions they had accumulated and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to travel to the land of Canaan. Eventually they arrived in the land of Canaan. ⁶ Abram passed through the land until he came to the Oak of Moreh at the place called Shechem. The Canaanites were in the land at that time.

⁷ The Lord appeared to Abram and said, “I will give this land to your descendants.” Abram built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

⁸ He moved on from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent there, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. There he built an altar to the Lord and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 121: Front of Hymnal- I Lift Up My Eyes to the Mountains

Second Reading

Romans 4:1–5, 13–17

Abraham provides an example of how salvation is not earned but received as a gift through faith.

Abraham Justified by Faith

¹ What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered according to the flesh? ² If indeed Abraham had been justified by works, he would have had a reason to boast—but not before God. ³ For what does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁴ Now to a person who works, his pay is not counted as a gift but as something owed. ⁵ But to the person who does not work but believes in the God who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited to him as righteousness. ¹³ Indeed, the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not given to Abraham or his descendants through the law, but through the righteousness that is by

Gospel

John 3:1–17

By sharing the gospel of God's love for the world, Jesus gave the gift of faith to a Pharisee named Nicodemus.

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

¹ There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these miraculous signs you are doing unless God is with him."

³ Jesus replied, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless someone is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"

⁵ Jesus answered, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God! ⁶ Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh. Whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be surprised when I tell you that you must be born from above. ⁸ The wind blows where it pleases. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

⁹ "How can these things be?" asked Nicodemus.

¹⁰ "You are the teacher of Israel," Jesus answered, "and you do not know these things? ¹¹ Amen, Amen, I tell you: We speak what we know, and we testify about what we have seen. But you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.

¹⁴ "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ so that everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 570 God Loved the World So That He Gave

Sermon

Stand

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.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Heavenly Father, you loved the world and gave your Son to free us from sin and death by his obedient death on the cross.

We confess that without your love we are lost.

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the treasure of the gospel. By your Spirit, keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

Strengthen our determination to do what pleases you, no matter what the danger or the cost.

Guard and guide those who carry a cross in the name of Christ and face ridicule and persecution for the sake of the kingdom: missionaries and chaplains, young people who stand up for what is right in the face of pressure to do what is wrong, and all who pay a high price for their faith and values as Christians.

By your Spirit, O Lord, grant them patience and endurance.

Keep in your care those who carry heavy burdens in life: the sick and the chronically ill, the depressed and the lonely, those torn by conflict in personal relationships, and those victimized by war and injustice. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Comfort all who face the terrors of life with a heavy heart.

Grant them peace, O Lord, and in your mercy, be their guardian and friend, their comfort and hope.

Watch over those who care for others: pastors and counselors; physicians and nurses; social workers and caring friends; all who feed the hungry, comfort the hurting, and stand beside the dying.

Strengthen them in their work, O Lord, and do not let them become weary in doing good.

Hear us as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Help us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Keep us faithful even to the point of death, that we may receive the crown of life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 575 By Grace I'm Saved

sts. 1-2

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.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.
Amen.

Hymn: 522 Beautiful Savior

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

Thursday: 6:30 PM Mid-Week Lent Service

Sunday: 8:00 AM Bible Study, 8:45 AM Worship and Communion, 9:45 AM Fellowship and Sunday School

WELS Regional Youth Night

The next WELS regional Youth night will take place on Sunday March 12th from 3:30-5:30 at Mount Olive in Lincoln. Please register using this link:

<https://forms.gle/wdYpFQ9oRc6qWHSG6>

Mid-Week Lent Services

Mid-week Lent services will be on Thursdays at 6:30 PM. There is a sheet at the entry of the church to sign up for the main dish following our mid-week Lenten services.

Care Center Bags

The Care Center Bags from the Grace Ladies will be on the kitchen counter on February 26th. They will be delivered by the Grace Ladies on April 2nd for Easter.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.graceseward.org on the member connect tab or scan this code.



Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gracelutheranseward



Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Sunday Bible Class 15, Sunday School 4, Worship 41 in person, Facebook Reached 41, Audio/YouTube 12. Offerings: Home 395.00, WELS 130.00, NELHS 505.00, Trinity 500.00, Benevolence 425.00 **To God be the glory!**