

Order of Worship for Sunday, March 14, 2021
4th Sunday of Lent – The Power of Sacrifice: The Spotlight of Grace

*Not available on prerecorded services

Listen at 814-422-6238. Watch online at www.PennsValleyParish.info

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: God is good.

Many: All the time.

One: And all the time,

Many: God is good.

One: Let all God's people cry out in joy:

Many: God's steadfast love endures for ever.

OPENING PRAYER

God of immeasurable grace, you meet us in our time of need and cause your face to shine upon us. You sent your Son into the world, that we might be saved; and you fashioned us into vessels of your love and light. Redeem us this day, O God, that we may be found worthy of the one who came to bring us to life. Amen.

*HYMN Nothing but the Blood of Jesus UMH 362

BLESSING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS – DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE Measuring God's Love

JOYS AND CONCERNS - (The Lord's Prayer "trespass")

SELECTED SCRIPTURE Numbers 21:4-9, John 3:14-21

MESSAGE The Spotlight of Grace

*HYMN Lift High the Cross UMH 159

COMMISSION & BLESSING

BIBLE STUDY: Look Up and Live

Read Numbers 21:4-9 and John 3:14-21 and Isaiah 52:13-15.

- In Numbers 21:8, we see the common belief that looking upon an image of something would be protection against that thing. [1] In this story, we see that looking on the image of the snake would bring healing. What do we learn about the people in this story? [The people are impatient (v. 4); they spoke against God (v. 5); they experience consequences because of their attitudes (v. 6); they repent (v. 7); they experience healing because God makes a way (vv. 8-9).] How are we like the people in this story? *[We too can be impatient and desire to be released from the consequences of our actions. We too need to repent and will find healing from God when we do.]*
- Earlier in the John passage, Jesus and Nicodemus have an exchange that includes the word play of being “born again.” Here, the word play is about being lifted up, clearly echoing back to the story from Numbers. How is God’s gift of Jesus like the image of the serpent? *[Both bring life to those in need of healing.]*
- What themes are common in both the Numbers story and the John passage? *[In both, there is need for healing. The people in the Numbers passage see the need for healing more readily than Nicodemus does. We see that life and healing follow repentance and flow from God’s mercy.]*
- The Romans believed their gruesome method of execution by crucifixion was a way of shaming those who came against their authority. Those dying by crucifixion were exposed (physically and metaphorically) and humiliated for all to see. (Those dying on a crucifix were nailed to a Roman cross and were at eye level of people passing by.) How does this idea of Jesus being lifted up on a cross get flipped upside down to being a method of exaltation, especially in light of Isaiah 52:13-15? *[While Rome’s intent was humiliation, God uses the crucifixion of Jesus for exaltation. We see the depths of God’s love to experience the depths of humiliation and out of that bring life and salvation.]*
- How are you experiencing a renewed call for repentance and the receiving of healing and new life by focusing on Jesus during Lent?

CLOSING PRAYER

God of crucifixion and Resurrection, we are in awe of the depths of your love, that you would go to such an extent to reveal your grace and mercy for the world. As we rend our hearts and as we “look up” to the symbol of Jesus’ cross, may we understand the reminders of your abundant and life-giving love. Empower us to extend your love to all we encounter this week. Amen.

PASTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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