

Today's Theme for Worship: What Child Is This? Our Substitute and Sacrifice.

This child is the only hope we have for peace and a future. This child can wipe away every tear, drive away every fear. Here is the truth of Christmas: with this child, you lack nothing; without him, you have nothing.

Opening Hymn 53 To Shepherds as They Watched by Night

1 To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
"Behold the tender babe," they said,
"In yonder lowly manger laid,

2 "At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known.
It is the Christ, your Lord and King,
Who will to all salvation bring."

3 Oh, then rejoice that through his Son
God is with sinners now at one;
Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
Your brother is th' eternal God.

4 What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan storm and rave,
Christ is your brother-you are safe.

5 Not one he will or can forsake;
His cov'nant he will never break.
Let ev'ry scheme the tempter try,
You may his utmost pow'rs defy.

6 You shall and must at last prevail.
God's own you are; you cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. Richard Massie, 1800-87, alt.

P: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you.

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

P: 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.

P: 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.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

♪ Oh Taste And See

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Your Word, O Lord, is e-ter-nal;
it stands firm in the heav-ens.
Your faith-ful-ness con-tin-ues for-ev-er.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us Pray.

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming, deliver us from the corruption of our sin, and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: ♪ Amen**

First Lesson: Isaiah 50:4-9

⁴The LORD God gave me a tongue like the learned, an instructed tongue,
so I know how to sustain the weary with a word.

He wakes me up morning by morning.

He wakes up my ears so that I listen like the learned.

⁵The LORD God opened my ear,
and I myself was not rebellious.

I did not turn back.

⁶I submitted my back to those who beat me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard.
I did not hide my face from disgrace and from spit.

⁷The LORD God will help me,
so I will not be disgraced.

Therefore I have made my face hard like flint.
I know that I will not be put to shame.

⁸The one who will acquit me is near!

Who can accuse me?

Let us take our stand.

Who can pass judgment on me?

Let him approach me.

⁹Look, the LORD God will help me.

Who then can declare me guilty?

Look, all of them will wear out like a garment.

A moth will consume them.

Hymn 234 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is your health and salvation!
Let all who hear Now to his temple draw near,
Joining in glad adoration!

2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things is wondrously reigning
And, as on wings of an eagle, uplifting, sustaining.
Have you not seen All that is needful has been
Sent by his gracious ordaining?

5 Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen Sound from his people again;
Gladly forever adore him!

Text: Joachim Neander, 1650-80; tr. composite.

Second Lesson: Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰Certainly it was fitting for God (the one for whom and through whom everything exists), in leading many sons to glory, to bring the author of their salvation to his goal through sufferings.

¹¹For he who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified all have one Father. For that reason, he is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹²He says:

I will declare your name to my brothers.

Within the congregation I will sing your praise.

¹³And again:

I will trust in him.

And again:

Here I am and the children God has given me.

¹⁴Therefore, since the children share flesh and blood, he also shared the same flesh and blood, so that through death he could destroy the one who had the power of death (that is, the Devil) ¹⁵and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. ¹⁶For surely he was not concerned with helping angels but with helping Abraham's offspring. ¹⁷For this reason, he had to become like his brothers in every way, in order that he would be a merciful and faithful high priest in the things pertaining to God, so that he could pay for the sins of the people. ¹⁸Indeed, because he suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Verse:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. ⁴²When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the Festival. ⁴³When the days had ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Since they thought he was in their group, they went a day's journey. Then they began to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? See, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you."

⁴⁹He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father's business?" ⁵⁰They did not understand what he was telling them.

⁵¹He went down with them and came to Nazareth. He was always obedient to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵²Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

P: This the gospel of our Lord.

C: ♪ Praise be to you, O Christ!

Hymn of the Day: 41 Let All Together Praise Our God

1 Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,
And gives us his own Son.

2 He leaves his heav'nly Father's throne, Is born an infant small,
And in a manger, poor and lone, Lies in a humble stall,
Lies in a humble stall.

3 He veils in flesh his pow'r divine A servant's form to take;
In want and lowliness must die Who heav'n and earth did make,
Who heav'n and earth did make.

4 A wondrous change which he does make: He takes our flesh and blood,
And he conceals for sinners' sake His majesty as God,
His majesty as God.

5 He serves that I a lord may be-A great exchange indeed!
Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need,
To help me in my need?

6 For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.
The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,
To God our thanks we pay.

Text: Nikolaus Herman, c. 1480-1561, abr.; tr. August Crull, 1845-1923, alt.

Sermon

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.

Offering

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Prayer of the Church

Hymn: 343 Christ Is the World's Light

1 Christ is the world's light, Christ and none other;
Born in our darkness, he became our brother.
If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
Glory to God on high!

2 Christ is the world's peace, Christ and none other;
No one can serve him and despise another.
Who else unites us, one with God the Father?
Glory to God on high!

3 Christ is the world's life, Christ and none other;
Sold once for silver, murdered here, our brother.
He who redeemed us reigns with God the Father:
Glory to God on high!

4 Give God the glory, God and none other;
Give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
Give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
Glory to God on high!

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Prayer and Blessing

P: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **♩ A-men.**

P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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.

C: **♩ A-men, A-men, A-men**

Closing Hymn: 366 O Jesus So Sweet, O Jesus So Mild

1 O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
For sinners you became a child.
You came from heaven to fulfill
Your Father's just and holy will.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

2 O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
With God we now are reconciled.
You have for all the ransom paid,
Your Father's righteous anger stayed.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

3 O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!
Joy fills the world which sin defiled.
Whate'er we have belongs to you;
Oh, keep us faithful, strong, and true.
O Jesus so sweet, O Jesus so mild!

Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607-62, abr.; tr. Frieda Pietsch, alt.