

## WOMEN OF LENT (Lent 1) (March 2, 2023)

“God Works Through Us--Esther and Mary”

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

### Opening Hymn: “*We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died*” - Hymn #429

P: “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

**C: And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.**

P: For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**C: Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”** (Hebrews 12:1-3)

P:” Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

**C: Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** (Hebrews 13:7-8)

### Esther 7:1-10

P: So the King of Persia and Haman went to Queen Esther’s banquet, and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, “Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted.” Then Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.”

King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, “Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?” Esther said, “An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!” Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life. Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, “Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?” As soon as the word left the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, “A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits stands by Haman’s house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king.” The king said, “Impale him on it!” So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king’s fury subsided.

P: O Lord have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Luke 1:26-38**

P: In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

P: O Lord have mercy on us.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Message Hymn:** *"For All the Faithful Women"* - **Hymn #855 vs. 1, screen, 8,3,4**

Screen verse:

For Esther from the captives  
Of Jews in Babylon  
Whom God placed in the palace  
As wife of King Xerxes  
She risked her life to give a plea  
And asked the king to grant  
That all God's people be helped  
To fight their enemies.

**Message:** *"God Works Through Us—Esther and Mary"*

**Hymn of Reflection:** *"Take My Life and Let It Be"* - **Hymn #783**

**Passion Story Reading from St. Matthew** – Matthew 26: 26-46

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away because of Me this night. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter answered Him, “Though they all fall away because of You, I will never fall away.” Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” Peter said to Him, “Even if I must die with You, I will not deny You!” And all the disciples said the same.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and He said to His disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.” And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then He said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and with Me.” And going a little farther He fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And He said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray that you not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, for the second time, He went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, Thy will be done.” And again He came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, He went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then He came to the disciples and said to them, “Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, My betrayer is at hand.”

P: In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

**C: But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

### **Responses on Being Useful to God:**

P: “But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.” (1 Corinthians 1:27)

**C: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”(Matthew 5:3-5)**

P: “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

**C: “And I am sure of this, that He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)**

P: “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)

**C: “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.” (1 Peter 3:9)**

P: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.” (James 1:15)

**C: “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.” (I John 4:12)**

P: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

**C: “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”** (Galatians 2:20)

P: “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might He increases strength.

**C: Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.”** (Isaiah 40:28-31)

P: “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” (Philippians 2:12-13)

**C: “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”** (Matthew 5:16)

### **Prayer:**

P: Lord God, what can we weak people do. It is often so much to just take care of our own needs, that we wonder what we can do for others. Remind us

**ALL: That Abraham was too old, Leah was ugly, Joseph was abused, Moses had a speech problem, Jeremiah and Timothy were so young, Naomi was a widow, that Onesimus (his name means, “Useful”), was a slave, Job lost everything, the Samaritan man had leprosy, and Lazarus was dead..**

P: Help us to look to the examples of Esther and Mary, who even though they were young women, were Your servants to bring salvation to many people.

**C: Help us to say with Mary, “I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.”**

(other concerns)

P: All this we pray as Jesus taught us to pray . . .

### **Lord Prayer:**

#### **Closing Prayer:**

P: Almighty God, draw our hearts to You. guide our minds, fill our imaginations, control our wills, so that we may be wholly Yours. Use us as You will to Your glory and the welfare of Your people, through our Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

**C: Amen.**

#### **Blessing: (pastor)**

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “Abide with Me” - Hymn #878**