

WOMEN OF LENT (Lent 4)
Serving God: Rebekah and Dorcas (Tabitha)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Alas and Did My Savior Bleed” - Hymn #437

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)

Rebekah: Genesis 24:1-4, 10-20

P: Abraham was now very old, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh. I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”

Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master’s camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water. Then he prayed, “LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a young woman, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one You have chosen for Your servant Isaac. By this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.”

Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor. The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

The servant hurried to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water from your jar.”

“Drink, my lord,” she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink.

After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink." So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Dorcas (Tabitha) Acts 9:36-43

P: Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, "Please come to us without delay." So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Message Hymn: *"For All the Faithful Women"* - **Hymn #855 vs. 1, screen, 12, 3,4**

Screen verse:

For Isaac's wife Rebekah
Chosen by God Himself
When Abram sent his servant
To find a wife for his son.
When at the well the servant stopped
He met Rebekah there.
She watered then his camel,
He knew she was the one.

Message: *"Serving God--Rebekah and Dorcas"*

Hymn of Reflection: *"Where Charity and Love Prevail"* - **Hymn #845**

Passion Story Reading from St. Matthew – Matthew 27: 11-31

P: Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You have said so." But when He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" But He gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered Jesus up. Besides, while Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of Him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said, "Let Him be crucified!" And he said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let Him be crucified!"

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they spit on Him and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes on Him and led Him away to crucify Him.

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 Serving God:

P: "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and He will reward them for what they have done." (Proverbs 19:17)

C: "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

P: "God is not unjust; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them." (Hebrews 6:10)

C: "Do not look to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." (Philippians 2:4)

P: "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." (Galatians 5:13)

C: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." (Romans 12:1)

P: “But be sure to fear the LORD and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you.” (1 Samuel 12:24)

C: “Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, My servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me.” (John 12:26)

P: “Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” (Romans 12:11)

C: “The greatest among you will be your servant.” (Matthew 23:11)

P: “Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (Luke 6:38)

C: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45)

P: “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)

C: “And whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:27-8)

P: “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.

C: Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” (Romans 12:9-13)

Prayers:

Prayer on Serving God:

ALL: Lord, make us instruments of Your peace. Where there is hatred let us sow love; Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light; Where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that we may not so much seek To be consoled as to console; To be understood as to understand; To be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (Attributed to St. Francis of Assisi)

The Lord’s Prayer:

Closing Prayer:

P: Christ Jesus, You came to serve, not be served. Help us to follow the example of Rebekah and Mary and Martha is serving You by serving others.

C: Amen.

Blessing (pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “Blest Be the Tide That Binds” - Hymn #649