

## Order of Worship for July 21, 2024

### Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn: “By Grace I’m Saved” - Hymn #566**

**Confession and Absolution p. 203**

### Service of the Word

#### Entrance Psalm:

P: You, O LORD, are enthroned forever;

**C: You are remembered throughout all generations.**

P: Hear my prayer, O LORD;

**C: let my cry come to You!**

P: Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my distress!

**C: Incline Your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call!**

P: For my days pass away like smoke,

**C: and my bones burn like a furnace.**

P: My days are like an evening shadow;

**C: I wither away like grass.**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: You, O LORD, are enthroned forever;

**C: You are remembered throughout all generations.**

**Kyrie: (Lord Have Mercy) p. 204**

**Gloria in Excelsis: (Glory to God in the Highest) pg. 204**

#### Salutation:

P: The Lord be with you,

**C: and also with you.**

#### Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray... Lord God, heavenly Father, You rescued the three young men from the fiery furnace through the miraculous intervention of an angel. Save us now through the presence of Jesus who has conquered all our enemies through His blood and taken away all our sins as the Lamb of God, who now reigns from His heavenly throne with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading:** Daniel 3 (Book – The Fiery Furnace)

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1

R: So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**Alleluia and Verse:** pg. 205

**Holy Gospel: Luke 24:36-49**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-fourth chapter:

**C: Glory to You, O Lord:**

P: As the disciples were talking about these things, Jesus Himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Touch Me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave Him a piece of broiled fish, and He took it and ate before them.

Then He said to them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon Hymn:** *“All You Works of God, Bless the Lord”* - **Hymn #930**

**Sermon:** *“In the Fiery Furnace”* **Daniel 3**

Do you know what the most common command in the Bible is? Some of you might guess that it's a command to love, since Jesus spends a lot of time telling people to love God, love their

neighbors, and love their enemies. Others of you might guess it's a command to be humble, since pride is the source of many of the greatest sins.

The most common command in the Bible is the command to not be afraid. "Fear not" are the first words of almost every angelic messenger, from when God made his covenant with Abraham, to the angels that appeared to the shepherds the first Christmas. From David to Elijah, from Isaiah to Jeremiah, God continuously reminded his people not to fear. When Jesus charged the twelve disciples with their responsibility to teach and preach, He told them not to be afraid of those who would seek to harm them for proclaiming the truth. To the women gathering at the empty tomb and to the disciples seeing the resurrected Jesus, the message was the same: do not be afraid.

In every instance, people faced legitimate fears. Things out of the ordinary were happening, big changes were coming. But each time God's message remained consistent. Depending on which translation you use, there are 366 "fear not" verses in the Bible – one for every day of the year, including one for a leap year!

Unfortunately, the reason that the command to fear not is the most common command in the Bible is that people continually find themselves in scary situations. And that's what happened to the three young men who are thrown into the fiery furnace.

But that's not the only time they needed to not be afraid. These three young men were born in the land of Judea. Their birth names were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, but they were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar's army and brought to Babylon to serve him. Going to a strange land far from home, far from family and friends can be frightening in the best of circumstances, and these were far from the best circumstances. They were captives in a foreign, hostile land, that didn't respect their culture or beliefs. In fact, the Babylonians wanted to make them good Babylonians, instead of good Israelites. And so they faced some frightening situations as they had to navigate what they could go along with, and what they had to refuse to do, even at the potential cost of their lives.

Even before this episode with the fiery furnace, these three young men, along with Daniel, were forced to make choices about what would be acceptable for them in this strange, hostile land they'd been brought to. And their choices don't make sense to us. In fact, they seem a little strange. They're brought in captivity to Babylon to be trained to be Babylonian officials. They don't object to their course of study. They don't object to their accommodations. They don't even object to having to take on new names, names which honored Babylonian gods, instead of the one true God who their Hebrew names honored. Their birth names had been given to honor the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they were given Babylonian names to honor the Babylonian gods, to show that they belonged to Babylon. So Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah became Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Instead, they object to meals. Why? Why would they object to being given an all you can eat buffet and an open bar every night? What kind of students are they to object to free food and drink? The problem is especially the meat. They know for sure that any meat served at these

meals was not killed in the manner prescribed in their laws. The meat might not have always been labeled, and they could have been worried about eating unclean animals. The meat also probably came from sacrifices to false gods. And too much booze would lead to other problems, just as it does today. So they got permission to eat just vegetables and water, and were healthier than everyone else who was feasting on fatty foods every day. Facing their fears of standing up to the officials over them, and the wrath of their fellow students when they lost their free meals, was worth it to remain faithful to God's commands about food.

But now we come to another challenge. They'd graduated and been appointed officials. But their success brought jealousy and envy from those around them. So when King Nebuchadnezzar made a golden statue, and commanded everyone to worship it, and these three did not, their coworkers saw an opportunity and took it. They had them brought before the king, who commanded they bow before the statues. But they refused. They knew that was a line they could not cross.

They also knew that God could save them. God could rescue them from the fire of the furnace and the power of the king. But even if God did not rescue them, they would remain faithful. They would not serve the false gods and would not bow down to the statue.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fire, and something amazing happened. The fires were not quenched, yet neither did the men die. Instead, those brave men stood their ground. They were surrounded by flames, engulfed in the one thing they were probably praying would have gone away. But even while the fires roared around them, they were not alone. A fourth was seen in the fire. King Nebuchadnezzar and all those with him could see the fourth man, who looked like a son of the gods. The fires raged around the friends and God used a fiery furnace to show that they were not alone. The flames engulfed them but Christ himself was there.

That's the source of our hope and joy. Almost every time God commands people to not be afraid, it comes with a promise. Do not be afraid, I am with you. Fears are calmed by the promise of God's presence. Christ was with the three young men in the fiery furnace, and their fears were relieved. They weren't burned, they weren't injured, and they didn't even smell like smoke after being inside a bonfire.

That sermon hymn we just sang is attributed to the three young men. It's not in the version of Daniel we have in our Bibles: it's in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint. And since it's in the Greek and not the Hebrew, it's left out of most Bibles but included in a section called the Apocrypha, which contains books that were written in the time between the Testaments. Even if it's not original, though, the fact that we can think about the three young men singing praises to God in the fiery furnace is worth remembering. If they could sing these praises to God in the fiery furnace, we can sing praises to God in our trials as well.

Their faith was amazing. They knew that God was mighty and powerful and could do absolutely anything, including dousing a fiery furnace with water or otherwise putting it out. On the other hand, they also knew that God was all-knowing, the greatest plan designer, and the

ultimate decision-maker. They knew God could, but they did not know if He would. They had decided to go into this situation trusting their Father in Heaven. If God performed a miracle, they would praise Him. If God did not, they would praise Him. And that is the most amazing faith that we could pray for.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were faithful. They worshiped God. Their confession did not waver. Even when stood at the mouth of the fiery furnace, they did not worship false gods. They did not give in to fear. Their confession was, “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us.”

**Creed:** 1<sup>st</sup> Article of Creed and Explanation pg. 322

**Prayer of the Church:**

P: Lord, in Your mercy . . .

**C: Hear our prayer.**

**Sharing Our Ministry:**

**Offering and Voluntary:**

**Service of the Sacrament** p. 208

**Preface:** p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should at all times and in all places, praise You, O Lord, Holy Father, almighty everlasting God, for keeping Your promises to be with Your people in all circumstances, as You were with the three young men in the fiery furnace. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

**Sanctus:** (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

P: We give thanks to You O Lord for saving the three young men from the fiery furnace, and for saving us from our sins. Bless us as we receive Jesus’ body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

**Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord, and Pax Domini:** (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

**Agnus Dei:** (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

**Distribution of Holy Communion:**

“*Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense*” - **Hymn # 741**

“*What Is the World to Me*” - **Hymn # 730**

**Nunc Dimittis:** (*Now let us depart*) p. 211

**Prayer after Communion:**

P: O God, Your Son protected faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace of the king. Grant us protection in our time of testing that we would boldly confess Your name, reject all false worship, and live and die in confidence, knowing that we are safe in Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**Benedicamus and Benediction:** p. 212

**Closing Hymn:** "*How Firm a Foundation*" - **Hymn # 728**

**Postlude**