

# **We See Jesus – Lent 2015**

## **"We See Jesus Giving Us Fellowship with God"**

Text: Leviticus 1:1-9; 3:6-11

As we walk in humble repentance during this Season of Lent, God grant that each of us would be moved to confess from our hearts this simple confession and prayer: **"God be merciful to me, the sinner."** Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians, during our series of mid-week Lenten services this year, we are focusing our meditations around the theme: *We See Jesus*. Our goal is to take a walk through the Old Testament in search of our Lord Christ. This evening we will find Jesus in the Old Testament sacrifices, and there we will see *Jesus giving us fellowship with God*. Our text is found recorded by God the Holy Spirit in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapters of the Book of Leviticus, several selected verses:

<sup>ESV</sup> **Leviticus 1:1-9; 3:6-11** *The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock. <sup>3</sup> ¶ "If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. <sup>4</sup> He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup> Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup> Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, <sup>7</sup> and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. <sup>8</sup> And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; <sup>9</sup> but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. ... <sup>6</sup> "If his offering for a sacrifice of peace offering to the LORD is an animal from the flock, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish. <sup>7</sup> If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, <sup>8</sup> lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar. <sup>9</sup> Then from the sacrifice of the peace offering he shall offer as a food offering to the LORD its fat; he shall remove the whole fat tail, cut off close to the backbone,*

*and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails <sup>10</sup> and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them at the loins and the long lobe of the liver that he shall remove with the kidneys. <sup>11</sup> And the priest shall burn it on the altar as a food offering to the LORD.*

So far the inspired words of our Holy God. Trusting God's promise that he would meet with us and bless us through the study of his holy words, so we pray, **"Sanctify us by Your truth, O Lord. Your Word is truth!"** Amen.

Last time I addressed you we found Jesus in the Old Testament tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness. There we saw Jesus bringing us into God's presence through his perfect life, offered on the cross of Calvary. Proof positive was seen in the tearing of the temple curtain at the moment of Jesus' death – evidence that Jesus thereby has reconciled us to God the Father, having taken away our sins. This evening we turn our attention to the Old Testament sacrifices, and with those sacrifices as our backdrop, *we see the Jesus of Lent giving us fellowship with God*.

First a bit of background concerning the various Old Testament sacrifices. The Book of Leviticus contains reference to five different kinds of sacrifice; 2 were mandatory, 3 were voluntary. *Sin Offerings* and *Guilt Offerings* were mandatory, commanded by God as a symbol of atonement for sin. The other three sacrifices were voluntary acts of worship or thanksgiving by the Jews. God did not command these sacrifices, but he did outline for the people how they were to be given if a man determined in his heart to do so. These voluntary acts of praise, thanksgiving, and dedication included the *Burnt Offering*, the *Grain Offering*, and the *Fellowship or Thanksgiving Offering*. Our text for this evening describes first the Burnt Offering, and second the Fellowship Offering. In both of these sacrifices, but particularly in the latter, we will see the Jesus of Lent this evening.

A note about the times of our text. Anyone can read the events described in Holy Scripture, but this evening I want you to feel them as well as hear or read them. It makes a difference. To this end we need to come to grasp, first of all, with how brutal those times were, and how bloody. They stand in sharp contrast to the sort of life most of us live today. Today most Americans buy their food already neatly processed and packaged. Most would rather not think about the process by which our food goes from the flock or the herd to our freezer. In that way, many of us are insulated today from that which was a common, everyday occurrence to the people of former times. If we open our eyes

this evening to the reality of life in Bible times, we might well be appalled at what we see there.

The people of the Old Testament lived in extremely rugged times. Never mind the oppressive heat, the disease, the lack of baths or showers, and the need to carry water every day (often from great distances) and the general lack of sanitation. Death was a near constant companion to folks of former times – death of nearly every kind. This evening, for example, we probably read quite carelessly, ***Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. <sup>6</sup> Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces.*** So also with the peace or fellowship offering, ***"If he offers a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, <sup>8</sup> lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it in front of the tent of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall throw its blood against the sides of the altar."***

Picture in your mind's eye that scene, repeated over and over again, day after day, year after year. Animals were led to the door of the tabernacle, and there they were to be killed. How? Their throats were cut. The animals had to be killed and their blood completely drained. It was a sin to eat or drink the blood of any animal. The volumes or quantities of blood are beyond our comprehension. Even a yearling bull can weigh up to ten times more than the average man, and the average man has about 6 quarts of blood. Gallons and gallons of blood flowed continually in the tabernacle. Blood was sprinkled on the altar in a never ending stream. It covered the altar. The tabernacle was regularly awash in blood, and that area of the courtyard was an open-air meat processing plant. The smell and the insects and the visual images can only be imagined.

While all parts of the Burnt Offering (the first mentioned in our text) were burned completely on the altar – except for the hide – many pieces of the Fellowship Offering, together with the bread that was offered, served as a fellowship meal for the people.

Now jump forward to one of our fellowship meals today. Picture it in your mind. There you will probably bring to mind images of dishes already prepared at the various homes and laid out in banquet style on long tables – mountains of meats, salads, vegetables, and desserts of very kind. Everything is neatly served in its own dish, steaming hot or nicely chilled. Afterwards the dishes are carried a few feet, and with a minimum of effort and fuss everything is soon as clean as the day it was new. Hardly a trace remains to give evidence of the banquet that was just consumed.

The contrast is obvious, but what is the point? The point is that our fellowship meals today convey none of the meaning or import of the Old Testament Fellowship Offerings and meals. There the emphasis was on death and blood and sacrifice. Today, if there is any meaning at all, it is in the area of enjoying fellowship and celebrating the benevolence of our God, who constantly gives us more than we need or deserve. What changed, and why did it change?

The answer, again, is Jesus; and this evening it forms the basis of how, where, and why we see Jesus in the Old Testament Sacrifices.

If I were to ask you how or where you see Jesus in the Old Testament sacrifices, I have little doubt that you would point to the fact that Jesus is our Passover Lamb who was sacrificed for us. You would, of course, be right, but only to a point. Remember how there were five different sacrifices in the Old Testament, and how two were mandatory and three were voluntary? The sacrifice of Jesus as our Lamb without blemish or defect really only has the most direct connection to the mandatory sacrifices for sin – the Sin and Guilt Offerings. Jesus was sacrificed to pay for the sins of the world. The Book of Hebrews pointed to this type of sacrifice when it contrasted the death of Jesus with the veritable flood of blood in the tabernacle, and later in the temple. There we read, ***"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup> He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself."*** (Hebrews 7:26-27)

Clearly then we are right to see Jesus in the Sin and Guilt Offerings, but what of the Burnt and Fellowship Offerings? How or where do we see Jesus there? Think back to those early fellowship meals, meals made possible only through death and blood. The point was that the people did not then enjoy the kind of fellowship with God the Father that we today enjoy. What does that mean? The fact that a sacrificial death had to take place before every such fellowship meal points clearly ahead to Jesus. Prior to the sacrificial death of the Son of God on the cross of Calvary, no one could enjoy the kind of fellowship that we today regularly take for granted. This is how, in comparing the actions of Jesus during Lent to the Old Testament Fellowship Sacrifices, we see *Jesus giving us fellowship with God.*

God could well have established the Old Testament fellowship meals any way he wanted to. He obviously chose the arrangement that he did for a specific reason. That reason was clearly to remind every single

believer that fellowship with God is not a right for sinful mankind. It is a dear and precious privilege that came only at great cost. The cost of such things, in a sinful world, is always death. In this case, the death is the death of Jesus Christ, the great, historic event that changed forever our relationship with God.

It will undoubtedly become more and more difficult for Christians today to recognize or remember both the cost and the value of the fellowship that we now enjoy. We live in a society obsessed with all manner of false notions connected with rights and entitlements. More and more we are being tainted by the patently silly idea that others owe us what they have earned, just by virtue of the fact that we have less; or that we are somehow entitled to whatever we believe we are entitled to. Such nonsense regularly spills over into our religious beliefs, and the result is the even sillier notion that God owes us such things as forgiveness, reconciliation, and fellowship. We are in no way entitled to such things. That is, in fact, what Lent is all about. We remind ourselves during this time in particular that we don't deserve the least of God's benefits, nor have we earned them in any way. Once we come to terms with such truths, only then does the reality – the enormity – of what Jesus did for us begin to take shape in our hearts. In particular this evening, only in realizing that we did not always enjoy such close fellowship with God the Father do we begin to recognize with thankful hearts that Jesus won this too for us when he sacrificed himself to make us clean and acceptable in the sight of our Holy God. His death won for us some truly amazing privileges.

Look then to Jesus during this Lenten season and see in him the sacrifice that established fellowship between us and our God. See the bloody rituals of the Old Testament and rejoice in the bright clean perfection that is ours now through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. And then look beyond, to the immeasurably greater existence that will one day be ours in heaven. Recognize, finally, that every part, every element of what Jesus did for us is a gift, given by our Savior God to sinners like us. Amazing. Amen.

# ST PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E Divide Ave Bismarck, ND 58501

Office: (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

[www.bismarcklutheran.org](http://www.bismarcklutheran.org)

Michael McEnroe – President

Eileen McEnroe - Organist

Michael Roehl – Pastor

Suzannah Miller - Organist

## Mid-Week Lenten Services - 2015

**The Opening Hymn** *(As noted on the back page and on the Hymn Board)*

### Invocation

**Pastor:** *In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

**Congregation:** *(Spoken) Amen.*

**Confession and Absolution** *(TLH 318)*

**P:** *Acknowledging that we stand in the presence of our Holy God we humble ourselves, and in true repentance we confess our sins:*

**All:** *Before Thee, God, who knowest all, with grief and shame I prostrate fall.  
I see my sins against Thee, Lord, the sins of thought, of deed, and word.  
They press me sore; I cry to Thee: O God, be merciful to me!*

*O Lord, my God, to Thee I pray; oh, cast me not in wrath away!  
Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart, but let Him draw to Thee my heart  
That truly penitent I be: O God, be merciful to me!*

**P:** *Jesus Christ himself has been punished for your sins. God the Father has placed upon Jesus the iniquity of us all. According to His authority, and by His command, I announce to you the divine decree of our God that all of your sins are forgiven, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**All:**

*O Jesus, let Thy precious blood be to my soul a cleansing flood.  
Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest away, but grant that justified I may  
Go to my house at peace with Thee: O God, be merciful to me!*

**The Reading of the Passion History**

**The Apostolic Creed**

I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And 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.

**The Pre Sermon Hymn** *(As noted on the back page and on the Hymn Board)*

**The Sermon** – *The theme for our devotions this Lenten Season is*

**"We See Jesus"**

*(Please turn to the back page for this evening's service details)*

**The Response** – *(TLH Hymn 138 v5)*

**My Savior, I behold Thee with faith's enlightened eye;  
Of Thee no foe can rob me, his threats I can defy.  
Within my heart abiding, as Thou, O Lord, in me,  
Death can no longer frighten nor part my soul from Thee.  
Amen.**

**The Offering**

**The Prayer of the Day**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**The Benediction**

**P:** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
And the love of God the Father,  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

**C:** **Amen, Amen, Amen.** *(Sung by all)*

**The Closing Hymn** *(As noted on the back page and on the Hymn Board)*

**Silent Prayer**

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**Announcements** *[All are invited to remain for fellowship and light refreshments.]*

# Weekly Hymn and Meditation Schedule

**February 18**

**Hymns: 140, 157,  
149**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Making Us  
Clean"*

**Text: Numbers 19:2-  
6, 9-12, 20**

Pastor Naumann

**February 25**

**Hymns: 158, 32,  
154**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Bringing Us  
Into God's  
Presence"*

**Text: Exodus 40:17,  
20-30, 33-35**

Pastor Roehl

**March 4**

**Hymns: 141,  
142(1-4), 156**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Paying for Our  
Sins"*

**Text: Leviticus 4:1-3,  
22, 27-31; 6:1-7**

Pastor Naumann

**March 11**

**Hymns: 155,  
150(1-4), 150(5)**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Giving Us  
Fellowship with  
God"*

**Text: Leviticus 1:1-9,  
3:6-11**

Pastor Roehl

**March 18**

**Hymns: 18,  
151(1-4), 145**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Giving Us  
Eternal Life"*

**Text: Leviticus  
23:33-36, 39-42**

Pastor Naumann

**March 25**

**Hymns: 166,  
171(1,3-5), 558**

**Lenten Theme:  
" We See Jesus "**

*"...Acting as Our  
Go-Between"*

**Text: Exodus 28:1-2,  
15-17a, 21,29-31, 33,  
35-38**

Pastor Roehl

**-Please return this bulletin to the Entry Table for use next week-**