

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Beware of practicing your righteousness before others in order to be seen by them, for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

⁵“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁶“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

February 22, 2026 First Sunday in Lent with the Ashes

Psalm 51:1-17

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; in your great compassion blot out my offenses.

² **Wash me through and through from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin.**

³ For I know my offenses, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ **Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are justified when you speak and right in your judgment.**

⁵ Indeed, I was born steeped in wickedness, a sinner from my mother's womb.

⁶ **Indeed, you delight in truth deep within me, and would have me know wisdom deep within.**

⁷ Remove my sins with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be purer than snow.

⁸ **Let me hear joy and gladness; that the body you have broken may rejoice.**

⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my wickedness.

¹⁰ **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.**

¹³ Let me teach your ways to offenders, and sinners shall be restored to you.

¹⁴ **Rescue me from bloodshed, O God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.**

¹⁵ O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

¹⁶ For you take no delight in sacrifice, or I would give it.

You are not pleased with burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit;
a troubled and broken heart, O God, you will not despise.

Invitation to the Discipline of Lent

Friends in Christ, today with the whole church we enter the time of remembering Jesus' passover from death to life, and our life in Christ is renewed.

We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for God's mercy. We are created to experience joy in communion with God, to love one another, and to live in harmony with creation. But our sinful rebellion separates us from God, our neighbors, and creation, so that we do not enjoy the life our creator intended.

*As disciples of Jesus, we are called to a discipline that contends against evil and resists whatever leads us away from love of God and neighbor. I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent – self-examination and repentance, prayer and fasting, sacrificial giving and works of love – strengthened by the gifts of word and sacrament. Let us continue our journey through these forty days to the great Three Days of Jesus' death and resurrection.
(Silence)*

Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, out of your love and mercy you breathed into dust the breath of life, creating us to serve you and our neighbors. Call forth our prayers and acts of kindness, and strengthen us to face our mortality with confidence in the mercy of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

2 Corinthians 5:20b—6:10

^{20b} We entreat you on behalf of Christ: be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake God made the one who knew no sin to be sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{6:1} As we work together with him, we entreat you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ² For he says,

“At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
and on a day of salvation I have helped you.”

Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation! ³ We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴ but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: in great endurance, afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵ beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; ⁶ in purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷ truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸ in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors and yet are true, ⁹ as unknown and yet are well known, as dying and look—we are alive, as punished and yet not killed, ¹⁰ as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing everything.