Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Fix Our Eyes**

**All Of Oculi’s Propers**

Oculi – Lent 3 – 03.20.2022

 The third Sunday in Lent has historically been called Oculi Sunday – it has to do with the eyes, that we are ever and always to look to God.

Our text – or should I say, “texts” – for meditation today are all the propers for this Oculi Sunday. This means everything that is prescribed for today, including the Introit, collect for the day, gradual, and all three Scripture lessons.

Our sermon title is “Fix Our Eyes.”

That phrase, ‘fix our eyes’, can be taken in a couple different ways. First, if our eyes don't work the way they should, we need to have our eyes fixed – “fix our eyes.”

Secondly, ‘fix our eyes’ can be a manner of looking at something. To gaze upon something with an intensity and diligence, often done to discern the intimate details. To do this, you need to "fix our eyes" on that item.

This third Sunday in Lent has historically been called Oculi Sunday – having to do with the eyes – it is a Latin term, the name and overarching theme of the Sunday.

As an aside, if a Sunday has a Latin name, you can get a good idea of what that Latin name means by simply reading the first line of the Introit. Today’s introit begins, “my eyes are ever toward the Lord.” We might say, “my eyes are fixed upon the Lord,” we diligently focus upon Him.

Knowing the first commandment, and how we as Lutheran's explain it, that we are to fear love and trust in God above all things, we know we are to ever have our eyes to the Lord. We are to "fix our eyes on the Lord."

Psalm 119 is much about this commandment. Listen to how, the second section, bethe, uses that phrase.

*How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes! With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and* ***fix my eyes*** *on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word. (Psalm 119:9-16)*

I our lesson from Exodus, God has Moses confront Pharaoh. He's going to open Pharaoh's eyes to the might, the power, and the wonder of God in the miracles that are to be performed. But these plagues are done even more so for the people of Israel, that they might ‘fix their eyes on the Lord’. In fact. the second plague in our text, the plague of flies, the fourth plague in total, God uses to show Israel that He has set them apart as His chosen people. They are to ‘fix their eyes’ on the Lord, and trust Him only

Our epistle lesson might seem to have nothing to do with the eyes, but it does! Where does sexual immorality begin? With our eyes! Beauty catches our eyes and turns our head so our eyes might be fixed – something becomes the object of our passions, which is how lust begins. And we know that lust is adultery.

Where does covetousness begin? With our eyes! We see what others have, and we desire it for ourselves. Our eyes have fixed upon the object of our passion.

Do you see it dear friends, in both of these cases, something has become an idol to us – we have fixed our eyes upon it. In the meantime, we have failed to fix our eyes on the Lord.

Even in the Gospel lesson for today, they kept seeking from Jesus a sign from heaven. They wanted to see proof with their eyes. And yet, how many miracles did Jesus perform? How often had He done the very things they desired, but they refused to see? They were more concerned with what they wanted. They had the desires of their flesh.

In all three texts we see sinfulness rear its ugly head. What are the consequences of such sinfulness? Through the prophet Amos God warns His children. In fact, when we sin against the Lord, we would rather not attract His attention. It is not a nice thing to have the Lord’s eyes fixed upon you. Don’t believe me? Hear what God declared to Israel for there disobedience. “There I will command the sword, and it shall kill them; and I will fix my eyes upon them for evil and not for good.” (Amos 9:4) Yes, Israel will be punished for its disobedience.

If you remember the beginning of this sermon, I talked about the two manners in which ‘fix our eyes’ could be taken. The first was to repair them – to fix them.

We have already look at how we ‘fix our eyes’ upon things, looking at something intently – not just to discern details, but in a covetous and lustful manner. It is most evident that we need someone to wave a wand, mutter “oculus reparo.” It is a poor attempt at Latin, but with that phrase and a twitch of her wand, Hermoine Granger was able to repair Harry Potter’s glasses – again, and again, and again.

It is almost a good illustration for us. We too need someone to come to us and fix not our glasses, but our eyes. No, I am not talking about repairing my eyes so that I no longer need to wear glasses. You know exactly what I am talking about.

Our eyes are part of the problem that fuels our sinfulness. Jesus said it twice in Matthew’s Gospel. First in the sermon on the mount, “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.” (Mt. 5:29) He declared the same thing later to His disciples after His Transfiguration, “And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.” (Mt. 18:9)

Dearly beloved of God, we need God in Christ Jesus to “fix our eyes.” They need to be repaired. We are those blinded by sin. Blinded by the cares of the world. Blinded by our own passions and desires, but the things that our eyes behold and lead us astray. We sit by the side of the road begging the for Jesus to “fix our eyes.”

This, dear friends, He gladly does. He even proclaims that He had come to make the blind to see. In quoted the Old Testament prophesies about Himself, He hadn’t come just to open blind eyes to see the wonders of creation. He had come to open blind eyes that they might walk by faith and not by sight.

Christ comes to “fix our eyes,” to heal us of our sinfulness. In fact, that was the plan from the beginning, when in love, the Father fixed His eyes upon us. His greatest desire was for our – for your – eternal good.

In the incarnation of Christ, God further fixed His eyes upon you, all that the Son accomplished in His flesh – all His obedience to the Father, with His eyes fixed upon His will, was done that He might be the perfect sacrifice in your stead, to pay for your sins.

With His eyes lovingly fixed upon the Father’s will for your eternal well-being He allowed His flesh to be pierced upon the cross, His blood shed to pay the price of our forgiveness. That healing comes to us when we eat of that very pierced body and His resurrected blood. It is why we declare in song after that holy meal that our eyes have seen the salvation which God has prepared before the face of all people.

Dearly beloved of God, you “fix our eyes” upon the Lord as you come together today. You focus upon Him who is your salvation. Your eyes are toward the Lord for He has turned Himself toward you – He has had mercy upon you. He has fixed your eyes, bowed them down in repentance, and lifted them up in thanksgiving to God for the forgiveness He Himself has provided.

It is in thankfulness that we trust not in ourselves, but in Christ alone.

Fix your eyes upon the Lord – lift up your soul to Him.

Fix your eyes upon the Lord – trust in Him alone.

Fix your eyes upon the Lord – He will not let you be ashamed.

Fix your eyes upon the Lord – for He is your help, your strength, your song, and your salvation.

Fix your eye on Jesus – in His holy name. Amen.