



AMAZING *grace*

LENT



ASH WEDNESDAY
David



WEEK ONE
Isaiah of Babylon



WEEK TWO
The Prodigal Son



WEEK THREE
The Blind Man



WEEK FOUR
The Woman at the Well



WEEK FIVE
Paul

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AMAZING *grace* LENT

ABOUT “AMAZING GRACE–LENT”

In honor of the 250th anniversary of the writing of “Amazing Grace,” this worship series for Lent by theologian Michael Hoy ties the words of the beloved song to our lives today as Christ’s disciples. Those in the Bible who experienced the amazing grace of God help us each week to realize that though we once were lost in sin, we now have been found by Jesus, and though we once were blind to God’s mercy, we now can see his love at work in us through our Savior’s death and resurrection.

For each service, the series contains: complete order of service • dialogue sermon for two readers (the pastor and the character of the service) • children’s sermon • prayers • music for the accompanist • PowerPoint documents • notices for promotion

ORDERING INFORMATION

Additional resources are available from Creative Communications for the Parish.

Contact us for current pricing and availability. Call us at 1-800-325-9414.

Or visit our Amazing Grace landing page:

www.creativecommunications.com/amazinggrace

AMAZING *grace* LENT

WEEK 1: ISAIAH OF BABYLON

ORDER OF SERVICE

*And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips;
your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." Isaiah 6:7*

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
Who, thyself for me once giving to the darkest depths of woe:
Through thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on thee bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
Pain and scorn were heaped upon thee, O thou sinless Son of God!
Thus didst thou my soul deliver from the bonds of sin forever.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Thou hast suffered great affliction and hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion, fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented that my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Call to Worship.....Psalm 32:1-5

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

C Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

P For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

C For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

P I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;

C I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

Confession and Absolution

P As we come together to worship in the presence of God, we confess our sins and seek God’s grace and mercy. Isaiah was given a vision of God enthroned in the temple and the prophet was frightened by what he saw. He knew that he was a sinner in the presence of the holy God of Israel. With the prophet, we acknowledge and confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, we know that we are sinners. We do not obey your holy law. We follow our sinful desires and listen to the temptations of the world around us. The prophet confessed that he was unclean. We too are unclean. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.

P An angel touched the prophet’s lips with a coal from the altar of sacrifice and said, “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” Isaiah’s guilt was taken away. His sins were forgiven. As God showed grace to the prophet, he has shown his grace to us through Jesus’ atoning death. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)

P The prophet Isaiah was forgiven and sent out to proclaim the message of God’s judgment and grace. We too are forgiven and sent out to serve and to witness in Jesus’ name. With the prophet, we answer God’s call:

C Here I am! Send me!

Prayer of the Day

Children’s Sermon

Jesus, grant that balm and healing in your holy wounds I find,
Ev’ry hour that I am feeling pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within tempt my treach’rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning keep me from its first beginning.

Ev’ry wound that pains or grieves me by your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I’m faint, your cross revives me, granting new life to my soul.
Yes, your comfort renders sweet ev’ry bitter cup I meet;
For your all-atoning passion has procured my soul’s salvation.

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 6:1-8

Epistle Reading Romans 10:14-17

Gospel Reading..... Matthew 9:35-38

Hail, thou once despisèd Jesus! Hail, thou Galilean King!
Thou didst suffer to release us; thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, thou universal Savior, bearer of our sin and shame!
By thy merit we find favor; life is given through thy name.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, all our sins on thee were laid;
By almighty love anointed, thou hast full atonement made.
All thy people are forgiven through the virtue of thy blood;
Opened is the gate of heaven, reconciled are we with God.

Sermon

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, his Word my hope secures;
He will my Shield and Portion be, as long as life endures.

Apostles' Creed

C 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence 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.

Offering

Prayers

P Almighty God, your grace is the favor you show to undeserving sinners. Just as you showed grace to the prophet Isaiah and forgave his sins, you have forgiven us for the sake of Jesus our Savior. Gracious Lord,

C Have mercy on us and hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, during this season of Lent, a time of repentance, we remember that Jesus was sacrificed for our sins on the altar of the cross. As Isaiah's sins were burned away with a coal from the temple altar, our sins are washed away in Jesus' blood. Gracious Lord,

C Have mercy on us and hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering illness, sorrow and grief. Lead us by your Spirit to comfort them with the promises of your holy Word and to bring help to them in their time of need. Gracious Lord,

C Have mercy on us and hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, Isaiah was quick to answer your call. You sent him out with the message of your power and love. You asked, "Whom shall I send?" Bless the pastors, teachers, missionaries and others who answered your call and said, "Here I am. Send me." Watch over them and protect them as they proclaim the Gospel of salvation. By the power of your Spirit, extend your kingdom through the preaching of the good news. Gracious Lord,

C Have mercy on us and hear our prayer.

P Almighty God, you have forgiven our sins. Now, by the power of your Spirit, make us bold witnesses for our Savior. You ask, “Whom shall I send?” Lead us to answer with joy, “Here I am! Send me!”

C Have mercy on us and hear our prayer.

P Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction (Isaiah 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

P “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”

C Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

Hark, the voice of Jesus, crying, “Who will go and work today?
Fields are white and harvests waiting—who will bear the sheaves away?”
Loud and long the Master calleth; rich reward he offers thee.
Who will answer, gladly saying, “Here am I, send me, send me?”

Let none hear you idly saying, “There is nothing I can do,”
While the multitudes are dying and the Master calls for you.
Take the task he gives you gladly, let his work your pleasure be;
Answer quickly when he calleth, “Here am I, send me, send me!”

AMAZING *grace* LENT

WEEK 1: ISAIAH OF BABYLON

COMPLETE SCRIPT FOR WORSHIP LEADERS

- If desired, an **Environmental Projection** is shown on a screen or on the walls of your worship space to set the tone for the service before the service begins or throughout the service at various points:

[shutterstock.com/image-photo/babil-photos-ishtar-gate-hanging-gardens-1982445638](https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/babil-photos-ishtar-gate-hanging-gardens-1982445638)

- This **Theme Verse** is read aloud by the pastor at the start of the service or is read silently by the congregation before the service begins:

*And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips;
your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” Isaiah 6:7*

- The **Opening Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune Jesu, Meines Lebens Leben 87 87 88 77, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Christ, the life of all the living, Christ, the death of death, our foe,
 Who, thyself for me once giving to the darkest depths of woe:
 Through thy suff'rings, death, and merit I eternal life inherit.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Thou, ah! Thou, hast taken on thee bonds and stripes, a cruel rod;
 Pain and scorn were heaped upon thee, O thou sinless Son of God!
 Thus didst thou my soul deliver from the bonds of sin forever.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

Thou hast suffered great affliction and hast borne it patiently,
 Even death by crucifixion, fully to atone for me;
 Thou didst choose to be tormented that my doom should be prevented.
 Thousand, thousand thanks shall be, dearest Jesus, unto thee.

- The **Call to Worship** (from Psalm 32:1-5) is spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.

C Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

P For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

C For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

P I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity;

C I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

- The **Confession and Absolution** are spoken responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

P As we come together to worship in the presence of God, we confess our sins and seek God’s grace and mercy. Isaiah was given a vision of God enthroned in the temple and the prophet was frightened by what he saw. He knew that he was a sinner in the presence of the holy God of Israel. With the prophet, we acknowledge and confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness.

C **Almighty God, we know that we are sinners. We do not obey your holy law. We follow our sinful desires and listen to the temptations of the world around us. The prophet confessed that he was unclean. We too are unclean. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive our sins.**

P An angel touched the prophet’s lips with a coal from the altar of sacrifice and said, “Your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” Isaiah’s guilt was taken away. His sins were forgiven. As God showed grace to the prophet, he has shown his grace to us through Jesus’ atoning death. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C **I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,’ and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:5)**

P The prophet Isaiah was forgiven and sent out to proclaim the message of God’s judgment and grace. We too are forgiven and sent out to serve and to witness in Jesus’ name. With the prophet, we answer God’s call:

C **Here I am! Send me!**

- The **Prayer of the Day** is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

P Almighty God, your amazing grace was displayed in the life of the prophet Isaiah. His guilt was taken away and his sins forgiven. You have, in grace, forgiven us through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus our Lord. You have called us to live in love and service toward others. As we go about our daily lives, help us by your Spirit to share with others the love of Jesus and the promise of salvation through faith in his name. Hear our prayer and accept our praise in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

- The **Children’s Sermon** is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

Needed: pictures of angels

Ⓟ Can you think of some Bible stories that have angels as part of the story? (*Let children suggest stories.*) I have some pictures of angels that artists have done (*show pictures*). At the first Christmas, angels told the shepherds that Jesus was born. When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane on the night before he died, an angel came to help him be strong. On the first Easter, angels announced that Jesus had risen from the dead!

In one of our Bible lessons today, God shows himself to a prophet, a messenger of God, named Isaiah. Isaiah sees God sitting on his throne in his temple. He is surrounded by bright, powerful angels. We often see pictures of angels with two wings. The angels that Isaiah sees have six wings! They use two wings to fly and, to show their respect for God, they use two wings to cover their faces and two wings to cover their feet. These strong angels are calling out to each other, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” What would you think if you saw those angels? (*Let children answer.*) When he sees the angels, Isaiah is scared! He knows he is a sinner and he is the presence of the holy God! But then one of the angels takes a burning coal from the temple’s altar of sacrifice and touches it to Isaiah’s lips! Ouch! But Isaiah is not hurt. The angel tells him, “Your guilt is taken away.” Isaiah knew that God forgave his sins. What should he do now? Then God asks a question, “Whom shall I send?” God needs someone to carry his message of forgiveness to others. Right away Isaiah says, “Here I am. Send me!”

God sent Jesus to be our Savior. Jesus died on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. Because Jesus died for us, God forgives our sins. He takes our guilt away, just like Isaiah’s guilt was taken away. What should we do now? Like Isaiah, we can tell God, “Here I am! Send me!” We can tell other people about God’s love. We can tell them how Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead so their sins can be forgiven. And although it would be fun to fly, we don’t need wings to carry that message!

Let’s pray: Lord Jesus, I know that my sins are forgiven. When you need someone to tell others about your love, send me! Amen.

- The **Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune *Der Am Kreuz 87 87 77 88*, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Jesus, grant that balm and healing in your holy wounds I find,
 Ev’ry hour that I am feeling pains of body and of mind.
 Should some evil thought within tempt my treach’rous heart to sin,
 Show the peril, and from sinning keep me from its first beginning.

Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me by your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I'm faint, your cross revives me, granting new life to my soul.
Yes, your comfort renders sweet ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
For your all-atoning passion has procured my soul's salvation.

- The **Old Testament Reading**, Isaiah 6:1-8, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for." And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here I am! Send me."

- The **Epistle Reading**, Romans 10:14-17, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

- The **Gospel Reading**, Matthew 9:35-38, is spoken by the pastor or other worship leader:

Ⓟ And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

- The **Sermon Hymn** is sung by the congregation to the tune O Durchbrecher 87 87 D, or a selection from the contemporary music song suggestions list at the end of the music guide for this service can be sung instead:

Hail, thou once despised Jesus! Hail, thou Galilean King!
 Thou didst suffer to release us; thou didst free salvation bring.
 Hail, thou universal Savior, bearer of our sin and shame!
 By thy merit we find favor; life is given through thy name.

Paschal Lamb, by God appointed, all our sins on thee were laid;
 By almighty love anointed, thou hast full atonement made.
 All thy people are forgiven through the virtue of thy blood;
 Opened is the gate of heaven, reconciled are we with God.

- The **Sermon**, “Grace for the Despairing,” is delivered by the pastor **P** as narrator and another reader **R** as Isaiah, who perhaps is wearing a prayer shawl:

P Have you ever despaired? Has there ever been a time when meaningless and hopelessness seems to pervade your spirit, and where you cannot find light beyond the darkness? If so, you are not alone. Many, indeed most, of the faithful have gone through such times, along with the vast multitudes of humanity.

But we are also not alone in such times because God is with us. And God’s promising word to us in such times speaks a message of hope.

R “*Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.*”

P A time would come for the people of Israel when the glory days of their kingdom would be a distant memory. There would be no more boasting of the great city of Jerusalem or its great temple, for these would be leveled in ruins. And the only ones to rule over them were kings of foreign lands. This would be the time of exile.

To make matters worse, they knew that their exile was the just desserts for sins they had committed. The prophets of Israel warned that a day of judgment was coming when they would be held accountable for their injustices against the poor and the marginalized, for their false worship of other gods, and for their vain boasting in their own superiority. Even though these prophets were ignored and ridiculed, this day of judgment came, and the exile marked their own guilt. Now the scars of their exile weighed heavily upon their spirits. Their days were filled with emptiness. Their faith in God grew cold and faint. And their hearts were filled with despair.

But then, God would bring a new message to them through the prophet Isaiah. Unlike other prophetic messages of the past, there were no warning and judgment. Instead, God proclaimed an enlivening message of amazing grace and abundant good news!

℞ *“Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”*

ℙ Who among us does not welcome a message of comfort when we find our own spirits weighed down heavily by anxiety and despair? Who among us, especially when we know the depth of our own sins and the guilt of our conscience, would not value the precious grace of God sharing words of comfort and consolation—where God seeks us out, not to judge us, but to “speak tenderly” to us, to nurture us back to wholeness and life, to set us upon a new path of righteousness and hope?

God does not leave his people in despair, and judgment and death is never the last word. The last Word is always God’s word of enduring grace. And we may count on the everlasting promise of that saving Word.

℞ *“The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.”*

ℙ God’s promising word speaks hope. God’s Word declares an end to the chains of exile, and declares instead that all prisoners of despair and judgment are now set free. Moreover, God’s Word declares that their journey to freedom will be seen before the eyes of all of humanity, as a testimony for all of God’s enduring and glorious grace.

℞ *“A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.’”*

ℙ Isaiah describes how the wilderness itself will become transformed before their very eyes. Instead of a land of dryness and loneliness, God will make of it a place of welcoming beauty and streaming rivers.

℞ *“I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert..., to give drink to my chosen people. ... For the Lord will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song.”*