

Be Careful, However, That  
The Exercise Of Your  
Freedom Does Not Become  
A Stumbling Block To The  
Weak.

1 Corinthians 8-9

*"Exercise Your  
Freedom  
Carefully"*

*Fourth Sunday after  
the Epiphany*

*St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church*

*Rev. Ronald C. Szep, pastor*

**Wednesday, January 27, 2021**

**Sunday, January 31, 2021**

**Today's Order of Service has been printed out in its entirety in this service folder. Printed and recorded under OneLicense.net #A-717066**

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### **Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany of Our Lord**

Why follow him? Jesus shows his glory by his triumph over the devil.

In his own day he sometimes did that openly for many to see.

He still does it just as effectively but in a less public, less obvious way.

Just as his victory made manifest his glory then, so it does now.

Just as then, so now, everything is accomplished through his Word.

*Greeting by the minister*

*Please Stand*

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Let us pray.

Lord God, you know that we are surrounded by many dangers and that we often stumble and fall. Strengthen us in body and mind, and bring us safely through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

*Please Be Seated*

## **SCRIPTURE LESSON: Mark 1:21-28**

The devil is quiet when false doctrine is taught. But as soon as Jesus appears with the gospel, the devil is enraged and does all that he can to hinder the message. Here he does it by confessing what on the surface is the truth; but he does it with evil intent, to hinder the work of the glorious gospel. Who, after all, wants to be confessed by the devil? At the very least the confession of the demons would confuse people. But Jesus silences the devil and drives him away, while the devil in leaving demonstrates that his only power is to hurt and destroy, and only that so long as the Lord for reasons of his own permits it. That the devil is in the synagogue serves as a warning to us. Often those churches seem most united and peaceful where false doctrine is given the most room; but where the Word is preached in its truth and purity, there the devil is most busy stirring up strife in doctrine and in life, so that people will turn away from the truth. In your life, too, the devil's only power is the power to destroy and corrupt, to give pain and misery—in spite of his promise to give the opposite. But the glorious gospel's power to create is still more powerful than the horrible power of the devil to destroy. Don't cling to the one that Jesus is driving out!

<sup>21</sup> *They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.*

<sup>22</sup> *The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.*

<sup>23</sup> *Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out,*

<sup>24</sup> *“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

<sup>25</sup> *“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!”*

<sup>26</sup> *The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.*

<sup>27</sup> *The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.”*

<sup>28</sup> *News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.*

HYMN OF THE DAY: CW Hymn 395  
"Seek Where You May to Find a Way"

JUSTIFICATION

# 395 Seek Where You May to Find a Way



1 Seek where you may To find a way  
2 Seek whom you may To be your stay;  
3 Seek him a - lone, Who did a - tone,  
4 My heart's de - light, My crown most bright,



That leads to your sal - va - tion. My heart is  
None can re - deem his broth - er. All help - ers  
Who did your souls de - liv - er; Oh, seek him  
Je - sus, you are for - ev - er. Not wealth or



stilled; On Christ I build— He is the  
failed; This man pre - vailed, The God - Man,  
first, All you who thirst For grace that  
pride Or aught be - side Our bond of



one foun - da - tion. His Word is sure; His  
and none oth - er. The Ser - vant - Lord Our  
fails you nev - er. In ev - 'ry need Seek  
love shall sev - er. You are my Lord; Your



ev - 'ry foe; Through him I more than con - quer.  
he has died, The guilt - less for the guilt - y.  
will im - part His bless - ings with - out mea - sure.  
e'er be - tide. Oh, teach me, Lord, to trust you!

Text: Georg Weisdel, 1590–1635, abr.; tr. Arthur P. Voss, 1899–1955, alt.  
Tune: SUCH, WER DA WILL (447 447 44 447) Johann Stobäus, 1580–1646, alt.

**SERMON:** based on 1 Corinthians 8:1-13  
**“Exercise Your Freedom Carefully”**

Christ’s coming has freed us from observing the Old Testament ceremonial law. But we are still obliged to follow the moral law. How do we show that we take the moral law seriously? We seek to serve our neighbor, even when that means we give up for a time some of our Christian freedoms in matters of *adiaphora*. Loving service to our neighbor is, after all, not an *adiaphoron*. Even beyond matters of *adiaphora* we therefore want to take care that we do not by our words or actions place a stumbling block to the gospel in front of our neighbor, which the devil will use to turn them from the gospel. The Christian who by his words or actions causes his neighbor to think that God is not serious about his Word in either the law or the gospel helps the devil harden the heart of the neighbor against the gospel. *Could there be a greater harm to the conscience of our neighbor? Could there be a greater crime against the love of Christ for our neighbor?* Don’t find yourself hindering the Savior in his work of revealing his glory and the glory of the gospel to those around you.

**8** Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

<sup>2</sup> Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know.

<sup>3</sup> But whoever loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup> So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.”

<sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),

<sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

<sup>7</sup> But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

<sup>8</sup> *But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.*

<sup>9</sup> *Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.*

<sup>10</sup> *For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols?*

<sup>11</sup> *So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.*

<sup>12</sup> *When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.*

<sup>13</sup> *Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.*

*Please Stand*

### **THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH and THE LORD'S PRAYER**

M: Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, it is truly a blessed and faithful saying that you, God's own Son, came here to suffer, bleed, and die to redeem us sinners. And you have supplied us the gift of faith through the Holy Spirit that we might personally make your salvation our own. Thank you, blessed Jesus!

**C: May we never again be wandering sheep, helplessly lost by sin and unbelief from the heavenly fold.**

M: Send your Holy Spirit to guide and protect us by your Word. Keep our feet from straying into sin, our hearts from yielding to doubt and unbelief, and our minds from falling prey to false doctrine.

**C: Give us continual victory over everything that would rob us of our trust in you. Keep our lives uncluttered by the attractions and cares of this world.**

M: O Savior, fill our hearts with such firm reliance in you that we will be prepared at all times, should death overtake us. May we successfully endure any trials that may test us. In life and death, in prosperity and adversity, in good times and bad times, draw our hearts close to you.

**C: Whether it be pain or pleasure, cross or comfort, safety or danger, in youth or old age, health or sickness –whatever our condition or station in life—help us to glorify you by true faith and patient, godly living.**

*Special prayers and intercessions: optional, read by the minister*

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent Prayer*

M: Cause all who have been careless and slothful in spiritual matters to repent of their backsliding and to strive, with the Holy Spirit's aid, to be fruitful in good works. Lord, help us lest we be weighted down with earthly matters, and give us the desire to apply our hearts to heavenly wisdom.

**C: May it be of daily concern to us to live our lives ever more free of sin, doing what pleases you. Have mercy upon our human weaknesses, and forgive our many sins. And finally, make us partakers of your glory in heaven.**

M: Lord, countless sheep are still lost and straying, running swiftly but surely to their eternal destruction. Have mercy on them, and restore them through your means of grace. Give us a love for souls and make us bold to go out with the gospel to seek and to save the lost.

**C: May the blessings of salvation and of your gracious presence rest upon us and our homes and upon all who are dear to us. To the glory of your name we ask it. Amen.**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

### **THE BLESSING**

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

*Please Be Seated*

**CLOSING HYMN: CW Hymn 459**

***"O God, My Faithful God"***

459

O God, My Faithful God



1 O God, my faith - ful God, O Foun-tain ev - er  
 2 Grant me the strength to do With read - y heart and  
 3 Keep me from say - ing things That lat - er need re -  
 4 Lord, let me win my foes With kind - ly words and



flow - ing, Who good and per - fect gifts In mer -  
 will - ing What - ev - er you com - mand, My call -  
 call - ing; Grant that no i - dle words May from  
 ac - tions, And let me find good friends For coun -



cy are be - stow - ing, Give me a health - y  
 ing here ful - fill - ing, That I do what I  
 my lips be - fall - ing, But then, when in my  
 sel and cor - rec - tion. Help me, as you have

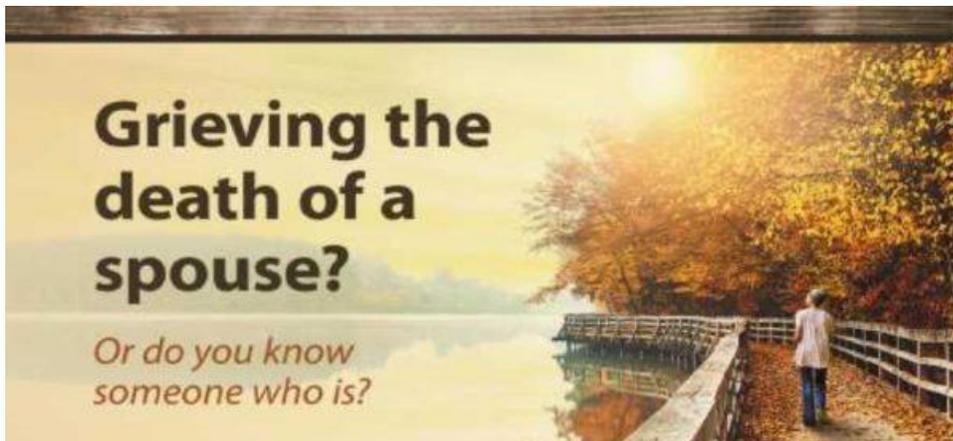


frame, And may I have with - in A con -  
 should While trust - ing you to bless The out -  
 place I must and ought to speak, My words  
 taught, To love both great and small And by



science free from blame, A soul un - hurt by sin.  
come for my good, For you must give suc - cess.  
grant pow'r and grace Lest I of - fend the weak.  
your Spir - it's might To live in peace with all.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647, abr., adapt.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.  
Tune: O GOTT, DU FROMMER GOTT (II) (67 67 66 66) *Neu-vermehrtes . . . Gesangbuch*, 3rd ed., Meiningen, 1693, alt.



## **GriefShare: Loss of a Spouse Saturday, February 20, 10am**

**Class size limited to 12 due to social distancing.  
Pre-registration required, no walk-ins.**

**Register at <https://www.griefshare.org/loss/events/3427>**