



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

February 21, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

Lenten Midweek 2

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 71

The Passion History: [Reading One](#)

Sermon Text: [Luke 22:47-53](#)

God on Trial Restraint

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

How do you feel when you can feel that burning desire to say something, to do something? It's very hard for us to be restrained in our words and actions. Often it's hard even when we know that we're wrong or what we're being accused of is true. You can see how this plays out in interviews today. If you ever watch any interviews on news channels or on a news talk show, is there any restraint? Is there any ability for anyone to let the other person finish their sentence and their comment, or is there one person talking over the other person constantly? Maybe you feel that at times where someone is talking or accusing and all you are thinking about is what you are going to say. There is no restraint. There is no holding back of your words. Sometimes, maybe what it is are your actions.

Today we look at what happened on Thursday of Holy Week as Jesus and His disciples were gathered in the Upper Room. We heard in the Passion Reading that He said He was going to be betrayed and then we read about how this happened, as well. We knew Jesus had told the people how He was going to be treated like a criminal and arrested, but do you think they thought it was going to come so soon and would look like this? As they are there in the garden, this group of soldiers (led by Judas) was coming to arrest Him, and what did the disciples ask? "Should we pull out our swords?" One, brashly and without any restraint, uses his sword. Peter cuts off the ear of one of those men. Jesus, showing restraint, says "No more of this." He heals the man's ear.

Often when we struggle with restraint, it's when we have done something wrong. When we are responding and we know that we're guilty. But Jesus is very different. He had done nothing wrong. He even calls that out to the people. Was He leading this violent insurrection? Why didn't He deserve this huge detachment of soldiers? Was He guilty

of anything, other than upsetting the teachers and the rulers? He explains that He had been in person with them and he taught publicly. Why couldn't they do this in public? This was completely unfair.

Jesus, in fact, the Man who is healing this severed ear, had done the same thing over and over again. He had healed people and helped people. He had done miracles and showed His love and compassion. And He was teaching the truth. He was teaching the kingdom of God and repentance and for people to turn from their sins and to believe. He had done nothing wrong, other than saying that He was God. That's what He does here, too.

When they ask who He is, in the Book of John He says, "***I am he,***" ([John 18:6](#)) what do the people do? They fall to the ground. What could Jesus have done at that moment? He could have called down a legion of angels. He could have dispatched these people. He could have walked off if He wanted, but no. He had **restraint**. Why did He have restraint and heal the man's ear? Why did He have restraint and let himself be taken into captivity and be arrested? He had restraint for us. He had this perfect, holy restraint because He was thinking about you and me and the whole world. Isn't that actually the opposite of what we often do?

When we don't have restraint, who are we thinking about? We're not thinking about that person and what I might say to that person or what I might do to that person. What am I thinking about? I'm thinking about myself and how I've been wronged and I need to show I have been wronged and how I am right. We know when we lack restraint, what it is really about is being self-serving and selfish. We don't want to deal with criticism. We don't even want to listen to what someone is saying and even worse, it turns into action because "That person needs to be punished for what they've done or said to me. They've hurt me, so I selfishly am taking action and harming them." Restraint is not something that is typical within us. Instead, we lash out. We have anger. And we are defensive, like we're on trial all the time and we need to justify ourselves. We do it over and over and over again. We fight back. We sin. We get angry. We so often lack restraint.

But Jesus didn't. Jesus had this perfect restraint and He healed. We look at Jesus and see that He was not thinking about himself. He was thinking about us. Though He didn't deserve any of this, He let himself be arrested, be beaten, went to trial, and He suffered for you and for me. He showed us this in those actions that night.

Instead of confronting them and attacking them, and then when Peter attacked, what does He do? He shows the greatest picture of loving your enemies. He heals this man's ear and shows His love. He is showing that picture of exactly what we should do in loving our enemies and forgiving those that have hurt us the most. That's quite a theme of Jesus' Passion.

As we continue the Passion Reading, we are going to see His restraint. He doesn't open His mouth when He is accused. He doesn't speak back to people who speak falsely about Him. When people mocked Him and beat Him, He could have showed His power. When people mocked Him on the cross and said, "If you're the Son of God, come down," ([Matthew 27:40](#)) He could have just done it, but He shows restraint and love for you and for me and for those people. He shows restraint as He says to those who are crucifying Him, "**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**" ([Luke 23:34](#))

We know that we need this Savior. We need Jesus. We need the one, who was obedient in our place, because we struggle so much with that. We need those examples to see that He was perfect in our place.

It's so easy in our world to not show restraint. I think there is an example in our world where we see these politicians and others, and we think we need to defend Christianity all the time and we need to defend what is right. There are times when we need to speak up, but how we do so is important. I think one of the great examples of this happened recently.

There is this really great rookie quarterback for the Texans. If you've heard of him, he is C.J. Stroud. Almost every interview he gives after a game, he recognizes his God. Not only does he say "Give glory to God," but almost every time he says, "Jesus, my Savior," which is often much more than people do. What made news was when NBC had this long interview of him afterwards. Right away he gives glory to God and says, "Thanks to Jesus, my Savior" and NBC, in their clips of sending it out on social media, cut out those first few lines. What would you do if you were him and they are editing your words and taking out your words to Jesus? Maybe you would lash out and say "Look! They are attacking Christians. They don't want me to share about Jesus." But I think he showed great restraint. He said this. "First and foremost, I just want to give all glory and praise to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ." That's what his words were in the interview. But then, in the controversy surrounding it, he responded, "I just really wanted to show love and show people what I stand for. I pray for everyone. I don't really have any feeling towards it. I just pray for everyone." And then about football he said "I feel like, of course, football is amazing, but one day, this sport will be done. This is our passion and our purpose is bigger than just football." Instead of lashing out and saying "Look! We're persecuted! Look what they are doing to Christianity" he said, "Let's pray for them. Let's pray for all people and continue to share that message about Jesus."

We need those examples because all that we see around us are examples of people that lack restraint. You see in sports that people need the quickest take and everyone fights back in Twitter and responds. Think about yourself when someone writes something or says something. You want to respond quickly or send that email or call back or say

something or say something behind their back. Think about if you've ever done this where you write up that email or that text and you don't send it and you think, "*Do I really need to say this? Can I have some restraint?*" I think as we see what our Savior has done for us, we can try to have that same restraint, knowing that we are loved and forgiven in the same way that Christ has forgiven us. We can show that restraint and love to others.

This might seem like weakness. What C.J. Stroud did might seem like weakness to people. "He didn't defend his faith. He didn't say what they did was wrong." But sometimes we need to stand up and say "We don't have to lash out." Our strength doesn't come from what we say. It comes from our Savior. Christ has walked before us and showed that we can be humble and restrained. He has loved us and forgives us and we don't have to build ourselves up or react in a poor way.

So remember that when you are wronged. Operate from this point of restraint. God declares you righteous and forgiven. You don't have to prove anything. God's will is going to prevail. He will take out justice. We don't have to be in control of all things, for He is. Know that the Holy Spirit will strengthen you and guide you. You are not alone. As we heard in that Passion Reading that darkness has come, we can be a light. With Christ, the Light of the world, we can share that light to others. Instead of swinging the sword, swinging swords of wrath and anger with our words or actions, we can swing that sword of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. And maybe through this strange behavior to some, a different message will go out. It's a message of love and compassion and forgiveness. It's an opportunity to share about our Savior, the one who, unlike us, has perfect restraint and forgives us for every time we struggle with our restraint. Amen.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. [\(Colossians 3:15\)](#) Amen.