

**March 1, 2020**

**Theme:** Lent (Week One) – Why?

**Scriptures:** Mark 2:7

"Why does he speak this way? He's insulting God. Only the one God can forgive sins."

**Sermon Title:** A Question That Whittles Down

**Sermon in a Sentence:** As Christ has the power to declare God's forgiveness, so too does the Body of Christ...though do we really own that forgiveness for ourselves?

**Call To Worship**

ONE: Let us examine our ways of living,

ALL: And return to Jesus Christ.

ONE: Let us seek a new and right spirit,

ALL: And follow the lead of Jesus Christ.

ONE: Let us make real the gifts of mercy and love,

ALL: And reveal the heart of Jesus Christ.

ONE: Let us make ourselves ready to meet the Living Christ.

**9am Prayer of Confession:** Holy God, we search for light in the depths of our souls but find only shadows. In our frustration we cry out with Paul, "Why can I not do what I know is right?" We too often fail to do what is good, even when it is clear and easy. Through your everlasting forgiveness, we request for your Spirit to intercede. Teach and guide us, so that your light will shine through us again. By your mercy, we make these confessions. Amen.

**Words of Absolution:** The scriptures are clear, God IS forgiving! Heavenly mercy is never in short supply. Today, in the name of Jesus Christ, I declare that you are loved - you are forgiven - you are a beloved member of God's family.

**Sermon Background:** This begins our Sunday morning Lenten Journey. It is focused on the word Why? There are those who patronize Jesus and his followers with their Why questions. These questions are intended to be rhetorical and even dismissive by those asking, but in this case, it points to an idea about forgiveness that Jesus will dismantle. Forgiveness does not belong in the hands of the professionals alone (those speaking for God because of their religious titles). It is a tool we own the moment we have acknowledge and accept the forgiveness God has given us. Not only do we need to forgive as a reflection of who God is, but we are empowered as the Body of Christ to speak Good News to the world: You are forgiven! And it is in our declaring that we begin to more fully own for ourselves the beautiful gift of forgiveness. How could our offering of God's everlasting forgiveness be "insulting" to God? Yet too often we are struggling with forgiveness in our own lives, and for that reason, we are not releasing it upon the world and into the lives of those who need it.

**Key Words/Phrases:** Why, question, searching  
Introspection, Vulnerability, confession, acknowledgment  
Forgiveness, mercy, pardon, absolution

**Video/Images:**

**Music:**

9:00

*These I Lay Down* #391

*Just As I Am* #339

11:00

*East to West* by Casting Crowns

*Kyrie Eleison* by Chris Tomlin

There might be a song for the Communion Liturgy — Hannah is working on it.