

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
July 11, 2021, 8:00, 9:15, and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION - *How do we use power? How do we speak truth to power? What do we do when we are both "power" and "prophet"? These are some of the questions raised by the lessons this week. The challenge we face is to exercise the power we have with justice and in submission to the higher authority of God's reign while holding the powers of our world accountable to God's mercy, compassion, and stewardship. May we be confronted by God's truth and power, and may we be transformed into people who courageously and faithfully speak truth to power when required.*

THEME AND VERSE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, he destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, he has forgiven our sins according to the riches of his grace, and he has made known to us the mystery of his will. This is our God!

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.
(Ephesians 1:11, 12)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: Mark 6:14-29 *When Herod hears about Jesus, he thinks it is John the Baptist. We then hear the story of when he had beheaded John at the request of his daughter. After John's disciples heard of John's death, they took his body and laid it in a tomb.*

King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason, these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised." For [at an earlier time] Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her.

For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king

said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard

for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

HYMN

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

Green #320

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.

Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is your arm alone and our defense is sure .

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come ,
Be now our guide while troubles last and our eternal home!

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us pause in the rush of summer activities and be present with God.

Lord, we know you are an exacting God, and you measure us with your rightness, yet we get out of line and take pleasure and pride in it. We choose to run in front of danger, but we think it a tragedy when we fall and get kicked in the head. We act as kings in our castles, we accumulate our fortunes and virtues and manipulate our morality in self-service until we make wrong into right. How can we hope to measure only what you can measure? Forgive us for the sins we name, save us from the sins we hide.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ. In him we have heard the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation. We are redeemed through Christ's blood and forgiven our trespasses. God freely bestows upon us this glorious grace. We are also marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit that we might set our hope on Christ and live for the praise of his glory.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"If I Could Only...!"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God our Father, we thank you that you have called to us in worship, and we learn of your ways. You know our needs, satisfy them with your unchanging love. In your presence may we find comfort in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, strength to meet temptation, grace to overcome disobedience, and courage to face up to the hostility of this rebellious world. Above all, may we meet Jesus and go out empowered by the Holy Spirit. Amen.

READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

God has blessed God's people in Christ, choosing us to be holy and to be adopted as His children, and bringing us forgiveness through Christ in whom we have also received an inheritance. God's Holy Spirit is a promise of this inheritance.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his

good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

HYMN

"This Is My Father's World"

Green #554

This is my Father's world, and to my list'ning ears
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world; I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas; his hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world; the birds their carols raise;
The morning light, the lily white, declare their maker's praise.
This is my Father's world; he shines in all that's fair,
In the rustling grass I hear him pass; he speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Father's world; oh, let me ne'er forget
That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is my Father's world; why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is king, let the heavens ring; God reigns; let the earth be glad!

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SERMON – “When we face our faults and failures before God, we experience fear and trembling. This kind of response can only bring about feelings of rejection – even at the highest levels of socialites. What do you have to fear?”

HYMN

“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love”

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.
We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.

*And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.*

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand.
And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land.

We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
We will work with each other, we will work side by side.
And we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
And all praise to Christ Jesus, his only son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus, you meet us where at the crossroads of our life. Your healing takes place in your time, in our place, in ways that we could not imagine. We dedicate our offerings and our lives to your service, that the hungry may be fed, the oppressed may receive justice, and the stranger may be welcomed in our midst. May this meal, which feeds us in this time, strengthen us in our faith so that we may go from here, empowered, healed, and forgiven, ready to share your love and mercy to all of your people. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go now, proclaiming to all how much Jesus has done for you. Be as one with each other in Christ. Wait for the Lord and be ready to hear God’s voice.

We live, empowered by God’s love.

And may God be your fortress; May Christ Jesus release you from all that troubles you; And may the Holy Spirit give you light and truth to sustain you day and night. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Amen! We go in Christ’s name, to love and serve the Lord!

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

The readings today all reflect what happens when realms clash. In Ephesians, the apostle reflects on the new realm of God into which both Jew and Gentile have been invited in Christ, and through which we know adoption as God's children and the gift of God's Spirit. Finally, Mark's Gospel, human power clashes with God's power as Herod executes John the Baptist out of his own and his wife's anger at John's truth telling prophecies. The message of this week is about comparing human rulership and God's rulership. When human leaders become corrupt and set themselves up as the ultimate authority, as in the case of King Herod, then God raises up prophets to speak truth and challenge them. But, when human leaders submit to God's authority and seek to bring their rulership in line with God's Reign, as with Paul, then he became the voice of God speaking truth to God's people.

The issue, then, is not whether we have power or not, but whether it is exercised under the greater authority of God, for the good of God's Reign and God's people. If not, then leaders must expect prophets to come calling.

The big challenge of following Christ in our daily lives and our local situations is that we are all both "power" and "prophet". We all exercise authority in some situations, whether as parents, pastors or community leaders, and we all have times when we may be called to challenge those who are in authority over us in the interests of justice. In some situations, we may even find ourselves playing both roles as we wrestle with our responsibility as leaders and our commitment to the principles of God's Reign – especially when the two aren't easily compatible.

When it comes to dealing with power, two principles can always guide us at least to some extent. The first is to understand God's purposes, as described in Ephesians, and our place in it, allowing our belonging in God's family to become our primary identity. Then, the second principle, is to ensure that, whatever power or influence we may exert, it is always with reference to and in submission to, God's higher authority. In this way, even when we make mistakes or wrong decisions, we, and those with whom we live and work, can rest in the knowledge that our hearts were right.

From John van de Laar at <http://sacredise.com>