

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, August 29, 2021, 8:00, 9:15, & 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

J. Hanson

INTRODUCTION Authenticity. The readings explore what it means to obey God's law and to live a righteous life. The readings conclude that, if our faith is simply a legalistic, outward observance, it is not authentic. The lesson is about ensuring that our hearts are devoted to God, that we remain passionate in our commitment to Christ and to God's Reign. May our worship lead us into authentic service to God and for others.

THEME AND VERSE

God from whom all blessings flow, we gather to worship you this day. You are greater than our comprehension. You are beyond any word we could use to describe you. Enlarge our vision with your word, Jesus. Instill hope in us in place of despair, peace in place of hatred, joy in place of depression, and love overwhelming our apathy. May your Holy Spirit surround and indwell this congregation now and forevermore. Who may dwell in the LORD's tabernacle? Who may abide upon your holy hill? Those who lead a blameless life and do what is right, who speak the truth from their heart; they do not slander with the tongue, they do no evil to their friends; they do not discredit a neighbor. Psalm 15

HYMN

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

Green # 551

Joyful, joyful we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee, praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine!

CCLI Song # 25321 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Jesus is questioned by the religious leaders because his disciples challenged traditional ways in which religious people determine what is pure or impure. In response, Jesus warns against worship that is only lip service and explains that it is not what comes from outside that defiles us but what comes from the heart.

¹Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], ²they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)

⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" ⁶He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." ²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather together to worship

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

We, who speak with our lips for each other's ears, let us talk with God from our hearts.

Lord God, we are not careful with words and deeds. We do not closely watch our intentions. We forget that our disobedience destroys our witness of you. We abandon your commandments and hold fast to our self-serving traditions. We are mostly hearers of your word, seldom doers. We excuse ourselves from studying your instructions, remaining devoted to following our hearts, discerning for ourselves what feels wrong and right. Lord, forgive us in our honest repentance, save us from the evil we will not acknowledge.

God chooses us as his people to show the light of salvation to the world. Jesus Christ is revealed to us, and for his sake our sins are forgiven. Let us not remain hypocrites, rather let us become hearers and doers of God's word. Hear God's mercy! Do not forget this liberation from sinfulness. Be inspired by the Holy Spirit to know the truth in the law and the love of God. Let us make God's mercy alive in thought, word, and deed.

By the power of God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

HYMN

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow"

Green # 565

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

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SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "It Takes Practice to be Natural"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, keep our hearts close to you. Help us reach out to our neighbor, even when busy or tired. Let us tear down walls when we'd rather let them stand. Please strengthen us. Whether visiting a prisoner, offering a smile, or feeding the hungry, be within us so that whatever we do, we do with your love. Let the world know we are your disciples not because our hands are clean but because they are soiled in the work of your people. Amen.

READING: James 1:17-27 *God has given us every good and perfect gift. Therefore, we can live God's law, remembering it and putting it into practice. We are called to be good listeners who act as they hear, who are slow to anger, who have a humble attitude and who care for those least able to care for themselves, the vulnerable in our world.*

¹⁷Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. ¹⁸In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

¹⁹You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; ²⁰for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. ²¹Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

²²But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. ²³For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; ²⁴for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.

²⁶If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. ²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

HYMN

"What Wondrous Love Is This"

Green # 385

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul,
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

When I was sinking down, sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down, sinking down,
When I was sinking down beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,
Christ laid aside his crown for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb I will sing, I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb I will sing;
To God and to the Lamb, who is the great I Am,
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing,
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

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SERMON - *What are we doing here? Is it all smoke and mirrors! Observing religious practices doesn't replace godly words or deeds that spring from a faithful heart. The natural outcome of humanity is not holy - it takes practice!*

HYMN

"Sanctuary"

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true;
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Lord, please teach me to be holy, make my new heart beat for you.
Use your fire to consume me, I want to be holy, like you.

Lord, please use me as your servant to bring glory unto you,
Purchased at a price, a living sacrifice, this my prayer, Lord, to you.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, all we have is nothing more than what we have received from your generous hand. What we offer here in this time of worship is not only thanks but also a faith-filled response. Pull us out of our limitations and into faithful service through the mighty actions of Jesus Christ. He forgives our sins and nourishes us for a life without limits. Remind us that in and through this bread and wine, your love will strengthen us in faith-filled service to you and into all the world. Amen

BENEDICTION & SENDING

As we go into this week, let us pay attention to how we live. Let us be authentic in our witness and our service, not limited by the restrictions of our society, but as those who respond faithfully being wise in Christ.

Wherever we go and whatever happens to us, we will give thanks to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Go, blessed and filled with the wisdom of God, blessed and nourished by the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, +, and blessed and directed by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Amen! We go in Christ's name, to love and serve!

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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.

We're return to reading Mark's Gospel and the readings for this week all challenge us to live righteously and justly by following God's law, living with humility and integrity and ensuring that we don't focus on outward observance. God's Law allows our hearts to be changed so that our service of God and others is a true, heartfelt response.

In Deuteronomy, the people are called to value and listen to God's laws, treasuring them as the source of wisdom. In James, those who hear the law but fail to live it out are compared to people who look at themselves in a mirror and then forget what they look like. But followers of Christ are called to put God's law into practice.

Finally, Jesus demonstrates that following the law is not about legalistic, outward observance, but is about being changed by the values and practices of God's Reign so that our hearts are pure and connected with God.

What might it mean for us to learn to celebrate our union with God and to follow Christ with obedience, noticing and enjoying life wherever we find it?

It is a pity that for too many people religion is seen as cold, institutionalized and heartless. It seems we have become more like the religious who were concerned with keeping the outside clean. Too often, we have made following Jesus about excluding "sinners" and keeping ourselves pure. Because of this, our faith has driven wedges into families, set communities at odds with one another, and ignored real issues of justice in favor of asserting our own particular "rights" or needs.

The passion that has characterized so many revival and justice movements in history has often been lost, and replaced with shallow emotionalism and glitzy, escapist gatherings. These are hard words for us to face, but until we do, we cannot restore our faith to the passionate, Christ-following, neighbor-loving, heart-capturing movement that it really is. As individuals and churches, we will never be effective in reaching our communities, our friends and our families with the message of the Gospel, until that message is the inspiration of our own lives.

When our hearts are captured by the Gospel and when we become passionate in our love of God, of people and of the world, we won't have to "preach" in order to be heard. The Gospel will be seen in our lives, and others will know the life-giving touch of God through us. As individuals and communities of faith, let us not underestimate the value of having a heart that beats for God; for our own spiritual health, and for bringing healing and restoration to the world.

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