

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
SUNDAY SCHOOL RALLY DAY

Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, September 12, 2021, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

J. Hanson

INTRODUCTION

Obeying the call to embrace God's instruction, watching how we use our tongues, taking up our crosses and following Jesus – these are the themes that come together this week. They may seem diverse, but they can all be brought together under the label of integrity. This quality marks a life that is true, just, gracious, and compassionate, and it's a quality that is desperately needed today. May the words we speak and sing in worship become the actions and attitudes of our lives.

THEME AND VERSE

This blessing cannot help it, it's the way it was designed. Lay it down and it rises again. Release it and it returns. Give it away and it makes a path back to you.

³⁴***He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*** Mark 8.34

HYMN

"Unto Thee, O Lord"

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

***O my God, I trust in thee,
Let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.***

Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed; yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed.

Show me thy ways, thy ways, O Lord. Teach me thy paths, thy paths, O Lord.

CCLI Song # 36011 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Mark 8:27-38

Jesus asks his disciples who the people say he is and then asks who his followers say he is. Peter replies that he is the Christ. Then Jesus predicts his coming death and resurrection, but Peter tries to correct him. Jesus responds by rebuking Peter and then teaching that all who seek to follow him must take up their crosses and not be ashamed of him.

²⁷Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" ²⁸And they answered him, "John

the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." ²⁹He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered

him, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

³⁴He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my

followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

HYMN

"He Leadeth Me"

Burgundy # 151

He leadeth me, oh, blessed thought! Oh, words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
Whate'er I do, where'er I be, still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

***He leadeth me, he leadeth me, by his own hand he leadeth me.
His faithful foll'wer I would be, for by his hand he leadeth me.***

Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine, nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see, since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

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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.

We know we cannot pretend to be deaf to God's call.

Lord God, we usually set our minds on human things, not on your things. We claim to be your disciples, but we are not so quick if it involves carrying a burden, or rejection, or suffering, or discomfort. You put the word in our ears and abilities in our hands, but we do not strive to become listeners and learners. How can we think to become followers and disciples? For the sins we name, forgive us, Lord. For the sins we hide, save us!

Our God desires to teach us, to open our ears, to call us to true repentance. To this end God sends the Messiah, the Christ. He underwent great suffering, was rejected and killed, and after three days rose from the grave. It is in Christ's sacrifice that our sins are forgiven. Through the power of the Holy Spirit it is possible to become followers, giving our very lives into the hands of God all for the good news in Jesus Christ,

all to the glory of God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"We Learn from a Great Teacher"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, we call you Lord, yet we easily worship other things, other activities, other relationships, other gods. You tell us we cannot serve two masters, and then we spend our time focusing our energies elsewhere, diverting our attention away from you. When our hearts are led astray, when we serve other gods, strengthen us to set our faces toward Jerusalem and to take up our cross and follow you. We pray, counting on your grace. Amen.

READING: James 3:1-12

The tongue is a small thing, but it has tremendous power for good or evil. Although human beings have tamed all sorts of animals, we struggle to tame the tongue. For God's people, blessing and curses should not come out of the same mouth.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. ⁴Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of

iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, ⁸but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

HYMN

“Thy Word”

Burgundy # 132

***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.***

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way, still you're there right beside me,
Nothing will I fear as long as you are near. Please be near me to the end.

I will not forget your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering.
Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side, and I will love you to the end.

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SERMON - Following Jesus makes no sense in this world. The truth is, following Jesus is a death...dying to our own agendas, our need for comforts and control, and our avoidance of pain.

Guide my feet while I run this race! Guide my feet while I run this race!
Guide my feet while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!

Search my heart while I run this race! Search my heart while I run this race!
Search my heart while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!

I'm your child while I run this race! I'm your child while I run this race!
I'm your child while I run this race, for I don't want to run this race in vain!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord God, save us from that which limits us and lead us into faithful service as was shown in the mighty acts of Jesus. He forgives our sins and nourishes us for a life without limits. As we are forgiven, we must forgive. We can live at peace! In and through this bread and wine your love will strengthen us in living a life of service to you, a life that is to be shared with all the world. Amen

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Jesus gave the charge, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” May we have the courage to follow Jesus in service to God and to others, knowing he will never abandon us!

Wherever we go and whatever happens to us, we will live as servants of 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.

The power of the mouth and proclamation of God's glory are the central focus this week. The Isaiah reading and the Gospel connect around the suffering that comes from following God's ways, and God's faithfulness in rescuing those who cry to out to him. Finally, James speaks about the importance of disciplining our tongues, using them for praise, blessing and teaching, rather than cursing.

The theme that brings all of these readings together can be summed up in one word: integrity. We live with integrity when we embrace God's wisdom and live it out, rather than just speaking words that we do not put into action. We live with integrity when we stay faithful to God's ways, and speak God's message, even though it often results in suffering, struggle and sacrifice. We live with integrity when we acknowledge who Jesus is and proclaim him as the Christ, while understanding that he is a crucified God who calls us to take up our own crosses. We live with integrity when our lives reflect the cross and resurrection of Jesus, and when our words are filled with praise, blessing and wisdom, rather than cursing.

When our words, our thoughts, our attitudes and our actions all align with one another, and with the ways of God that were taught and lived by Jesus, then our lives are lives of integrity and they are lives that add value and make a life-giving contribution to the world.

Perhaps the greatest threat to our integrity in our homes, churches and personal lives, is the call of expediency and consumerism. It's far easier to create "sexy" worship services that make people feel good, but leave their garbage unchallenged, than it is to hold people accountable to the Gospel. It is far easier to "go with the flow" than to stand up for truth, justice and love, especially among our own family members and friends. It is far easier to preach great self-help messages than to call people to allow Christ to change them.

Sometimes, rather than ensure our words have integrity, we simply remain silent. Sometimes, rather than holding to values of integrity and justice, we simply turn a blind eye to injustice. Sometimes, rather than get our hands dirty in serving others, it is easier to throw money at the problems we face and hope that someone else will deal with the practicalities.

But, we all know the power of integrity. We have all been impacted by people of faith whose lives have embodied what they believe in every part. And we have all seen the positive impact that such integrity can have on relationships, on communities, on our witness for Christ, and on the individuals who are served and saved by people of integrity.

May we be known less for our opulent sanctuaries and professional standards of performance in worship, and more for embodying the gracious words of Jesus Christ, the bold wisdom of Christ Jesus, and the sacrificial love of our Savior.

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