

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, September 19, 2021, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

INTRODUCTION

We all choose between wickedness or righteousness. The two words are simply defined; “wickedness” is the choice to live without regard for others; “righteousness” is the choice to live in service of others. We have been led to believe that we can find joy and life in the ways that the Bible calls “wickedness.” If we are to find personal and global healing, we need to embrace the call to “righteousness.” Our lives - as well as those of the rest of the world - may depend on how we live out our faith.

THEME AND VERSE

We come here today not because we are clever or witty or wise, but because God welcomes the sinners, because God loves us in spite of our failures. We come knowing that the greatest persons will be found among those who humbly serve like Jesus did, and that the brightest ideas and the deepest truths will come from those who see themselves as children in Christ’s kingdom.

O Lord, open us up in mind and heart. Enable our lives to declare your praise. You are a rich stream of living waters, and we would immerse ourselves in you! Psalm 1

MISSION MOMENT

HYMN

“Children of the Heavenly Father”

Green # 474

Children of the heav’nly Father safely in his bosom gather;
Nestling bird nor star in heaven such a refuge e’er was given.

Neither life nor death shall ever from the Lord his children sever;
Unto them his grace he showeth, and their sorrows all he knoweth.

Though he giveth or he taketh, God his children ne’er forsaketh;
His the loving purpose solely to preserve them pure and holy.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Mark 9:30-37

Jesus speaks of his death and resurrection, and then challenges the disciples for arguing about their place in Jesus’ favor. Jesus’ teaching and action are directed to the church whenever it is seduced by the world’s definition of greatness: prestige, power, influence, and money. The antidote to such a concern for greatness is servanthood.

³⁰[Jesus and the disciples went on] and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." ³²But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?"

³⁴But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest.

³⁵He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

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.

Let us draw near to God so that God may draw near to us.

Lord God, we are reluctant to look to you for right and wrong except, of course, when we are right and can prove it by quoting you or tradition, or we conspire to do wrong but claim it is for your glory. We consider ourselves leaders in the faith, yet we don't lead by being last. While we may not call ourselves great, we may identify and shun the least among us. We become false witnesses: welcoming our children's children but only some of your children. Lord, these are the sins we name...what sins are we hiding? Save us, Lord!

Our God knows good from evil and will judge righteously. God calls to trial our hearts and minds. But for our sakes, the Son of Man is betrayed, killed, and rises again. For Christ's sake our sins are forgiven. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we may know and live in the wisdom that comes from above: pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.

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

SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM (10:30)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

INSTALLATION OF SUNDAY SCHOOL AND LOGOS LEADERSHIP

HYMN

"Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me bring your love,
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord, and where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Make me a channel of your peace. Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light, and where there's sadness, ever joy.

***Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek so much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul.***

Make me a channel of your peace. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving our ourselves that we receive, and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"How Do I Care?"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of mystery and light, your weakness is greater than our strength, your foolishness outwits our cleverness, your gentleness defeats the strength and power we claim. You call first to be last and last to be first, the servant to be leader and ruler to empower all. Pour into our hearts the wisdom of your Word and Spirit that we may know your purpose and live to your glory. Amen.

READING: James 3:13—4:3, 7-8a

Wise followers of Christ can live a humble life. Jealousy and selfish ambition are not wise but cause the evil of conflict, murder, and struggle. Therefore, as God's people, resist evil, submit to God, draw near to God, and seek to be cleansed.

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. ¹⁵Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. ¹⁶For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of

righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

^{4:1}Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? ²You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

HYMN

"Nearer My God to Thee"

Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee. Even though it be a cross that raises me.
Still all my song shall be nearer my God to thee, nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee.

Though like the wanderer the sun gone down, darkness be over me my rest a stone.
Yet in my dreams I'd be nearer my God to thee, nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee.

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SERMON - *Christ Jesus taught us well, it's all or nothing. We must recognize how easy it is to justify our story as an excuse to do little or nothing.*

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name, I've been born again in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you, to share his love as he told me to.

***He said "Freely, freely you have received, freely, freely give.
Go in my name, and because you believe, others will know that I live."***

All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name, in earth and heav'n in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you, to share his pow'r as he told me to.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Recalling one of Jesus' teachings, "If you want to feel great, be willing to come last and to gladly serve others." We return from this table of grace with restored hope and renewed enthusiasm! May God give us the faith and love to put this into practice and the humility to permit others to do the same for us. Amen!

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go out clothed in strength and dignity. Submit yourselves to God and resist the devil.
Delight in the Lord's teaching, open your hands to the poor, and let your actions arise from the wisdom of God.

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

May God draw near and strengthen you, may Christ Jesus teach you the ways of simplicity, and may the Holy Spirit fill you with wisdom and make you fruitful in peace and righteousness.

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

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

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

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

Once again we are offered a choice. This time it is between our own selfish desires, ambitions and power, and serving, loving and sharing with others as we follow the way of Jesus.

The Scriptures call us to righteousness, humility, service and generosity. We are to avoid the ways of the wicked, which are driven by selfishness, jealousy, violence, and the hunger for power. This wicked life is reflected in the readings for this week. In Jeremiah, the prophet pleads for God's protection against the wicked who plot against him. And in the Gospel, Jesus predicts

his death, but also predicts his resurrection. Essentially, the message of the readings for this week is that life, peace, joy, love, prosperity and grace are found through living humbly, simply, kindly, generously, compassionately and with grace, conscientiousness, resourcefulness and responsibility.

If we reject these values, we reject God's Reign, and we doom ourselves to conflict, violence, lack, misery and judgment. As James suggests, though, even faith can become a mask for our worst human instincts, and so we need the attitude of submission to God's ways, and the humility to repent and receive forgiveness if we are to live in ways that bring life to us and to others. *We are increasingly faced with a choice...not between kindness and hostility, but between kindness and non-existence.*

It is a tough choice to give up personal power and self-interest in favor of the common good, but this is the way of Christ – the way of peace, service, grace and love. In every community there are those who seek to “work the system” to benefit themselves. Sometimes this is done maliciously, but often it is done with simple ignorance or neglect of the needs of the weak, poor, voiceless and defenseless. The truth is that we are all oppressed, and we are all oppressor at some point in our lives, and we all need to learn to turn away from our worst selves.

Taking up the cross of Christ means that we give up our quest to be the greatest, come alongside those who suffer and are persecuted, and support them, defend them and work with them for their upliftment, while ensuring that the powerful do not benefit at the expense of the least. Who are the ones who need this kind of support and protection in our community or church?

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