

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, September 5, 2021, 8:00, 9:15 & 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

J. Hanson

INTRODUCTION

There can be no question that God is concerned for the poor and vulnerable in our world. The Scriptures for this week affirm this! God expects people to reject favoritism and show love, grace, and compassion to all. It's a challenge, but it goes to the heart of the Gospel. May we be people of compassion.

THEME AND VERSE

Let all who draw breath praise the Lord. Happy are those whose help is from God—the one who made heaven and earth, the one who created the seas and all that is in them. Happy are those whose hope is in God—the one who keeps faith forever, the one who feeds the hungry and defends the oppressed.

I will praise the Lord as long as I live and will sing praises to my God all my whole life long. (Psalm 146)

HYMN

"Praise Him, Praise Him"

Praise him, praise him, all you little children, God is love, God is love. (repeat)

Love him, love him, all you little children, God is love, God is love. (repeat)

Thank him, thank him, all you little children, God is love, God is love. (repeat)

CCLI Song # 3376056 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Mark 7:24-37

Jesus' encounters with women usually signify turning points in his ministry. The conversation with a Syrophoenician woman marks a beginning in his mission to the Gentiles. He heals the woman's daughter and opens the ears and mouth of a deaf-mute man. Jesus tries to keep the people silent, but they insist on spreading the news.

²⁴[Jesus] set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, ²⁵but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. ²⁶Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She

begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰So she went

home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

³¹Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³²They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then looking up to

heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

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.

Our trail of unfaithfulness lies behind us. God will strengthen us in our repentance.

Lord God, how firmly rooted are we in our faith? We ignore your judgment to count on your mercy. We abandon works since they can't buy salvation. We are afraid of the changes you may make in our lives, and so we do not seek you with our whole heart. We judge others as unworthy of your mercy or as too far gone to be changed, and we fail to see your power for them and for us. For the sins we name, forgive us, Lord. For the sins we hide, Lord, save us!

Our God does come and save us. In the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, abundant mercy is poured upon us. It is for Christ's sake our sins are forgiven. Through the Holy Spirit our healing may take the effect of a testimony to the saving power of God. We also may testify in our own works of mercy

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

HYMN

"Praise Him, Praise Him"

Serve him, serve him, all you little children, God is love, God is love. (repeat)

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON *"What have you got?"*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Faithful God, you draw near to us in our joy and in our grief, in our hope and in our despair. When burdened, you lift us. We turn to you in search of your healing touch. God of compassion and love, move among us, open our eyes, dispel our fears, and show us the real life you have to offer. We pray this in the name of your risen Son, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

READING: James 2:8-10, 14-17

To show favoritism is to deny Jesus' faithfulness and is to break the law which calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is sinful to favor the wealthy over the poor. Claiming we have faith when we fail to live it out in acts of compassion is meaningless.

⁸You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ⁹But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. ¹⁰For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

¹⁴What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? ¹⁷So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

HYMN

"I Will Sing the Wondrous Story"

(tune) SBH # 493 (II)

I will sing the wondrous story of the Christ who died for me,
How he left his home in glory for the cross of Calvary.
I was lost, but Jesus found me, found the sheep that went astray,
Threw his loving arms around me, drew me back into his way.

I was bruised but Jesus healed me; faint was I from many-a fall;
Sight was gone, and fears possessed me, but he freed me from them all.
Days of darkness still come o'er me, sorrow's paths I often tread,
But the Savior still is with me; by his hand I'm safely led.

CCLI Song # 2328610 CCLI License # 1713417

SERMON - *When the Lord is present, people take notice! So why is it that we think we can use fear to motivate us to service? Isn't it enough that the generosity of God's blessings overflowing could cause us to actions that mirror God's grace?*

HYMN

"Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"

Burgundy # 150

Pass me not, O gentle Savior, hear my humble cry;
While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.

**Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry;
While on others thou art calling, do not pass me by.**

Trusting only in thy merit, would I seek thy face;
Heal my wounded, broken spirit, save me by thy grace.

Thou the spring of all my comfort, more than life to me,
Whom have I on earth beside thee? Whom in heav'n but thee?

CCLI Song # 5253861 CCLI License # 1713417

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, you 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. We are forgiven; we can be at peace! 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 you have been fed, go and feed the hungry. As you have been set free, go set the prisoner free. As you have received – give. And as you have heard – proclaim.

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!

Scripture portions are reprinted from Words for Worship, copyright 2017 Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. Scripture quotations from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

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.

In every reading this week God's preferential option for the poor and vulnerable is expressed. The Lessons offer us a clear and unequivocal call to justice as we follow Christ. In Isaiah God is revealed to be gracious and merciful to God's people, especially those who are weak and vulnerable, and the promise is given that God will bring healing and restoration to the broken and oppressed. In the letter of James, favoritism is denounced as breaking the law of love, and the people of faith are challenged to put their faith into action by caring for the poor.

Finally, Jesus is shown to be our example for compassionate living, as he heals both a Gentile woman's daughter (after she challenged him in his reluctance) and a Jewish man. The basic and consistent message of the Lesson this week is this: Our faith is seen in how we treat others, especially in our love for, protection of and inclusion of the poor, the broken and the vulnerable. As such, favoritism, prejudice and discrimination are to be rejected, and an inclusive love and welcome are to be embraced and practiced as basic and fundamental ingredients of our faith.

In every home and community, the temptation to show favoritism is present. In every neighborhood and church, the temptation to ignore the poorest and most vulnerable because of the pain and discomfort of reaching out is present. It is easy to build a safe and comfortable world around our faith, including only those who are like us in every way, and turning a blind eye to the injustice and suffering just outside our doors. But, to do this is to turn our backs on the Gospel.

Sometimes we need to be confronted by those we ignore – even as Jesus was confronted by the Gentile mother – and we need our hearts and attitudes challenged. This requires a humility

and openness that is not easy but is certainly Christlike. As we begin to see how we are connected with those who are different from us, and as we learn to treat people with compassion, sensitivity and respect, we begin to manifest the characteristics of God's Reign, and we begin to bring healing to others – and to ourselves.

We can stop blaming the poor for their plight and stop believing that wealth and happiness are divine rewards for good behavior. We can touch others with the love and acceptance of Jesus. As we live this Law of love, we may discover that we are more intimately connected with God than ever before, and that our lives have more meaning and joy than we could have believed possible. This is the promise of the Gospel, and the call of this week's readings.

John van de Laar at sacredise.com