

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
PENTECOST - THE HOLY SPIRIT BECKONS
Reverend John R. Hanson
Sunday, October 17, 2021, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

J. Hanson

INTRODUCTION - In the topsy turvy Reign of God, greatness is defined differently from the power, fame, and fortune criteria that is used by most human systems. Unfortunately, even we who claim to follow Jesus struggle with this essential truth of the Gospel. Yet, when we are faced with the Great Creator who willingly becomes a humble human servant, we cannot avoid the call of God to the greatness of service and sacrifice. May we reject any expression of faith or worship that glorifies systems of wealth, power, and instant gratification, and may we embrace again the worship of humble, selfless service.

THEME AND VERSE

Brothers and sisters, let us who live with faith in God proclaim, "Lord, you are my refuge and fortress, my God I will trust forever." His protection will follow us throughout our days. When we call out, we know that we are heard. He is with us in every trial and temptation; we rejoice in the salvation of the Almighty!
The Lord says, "I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer; I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue them and honor them. Psalm 91:14-15

HYMN

"O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come"

Green # 360

O Christ, the healer, we have come to pray for health, to plead for friends.
How can we fail to be restored, when reached by love that never ends?

From every ailment flesh endures our bodies clamor to be freed;
Yet in our hearts we would confess that wholeness is our deepest need.

In conflicts that destroy our health, we diagnose the world's disease;
Our common life declares our ills. Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?

Grant that we all, made one in faith, in your community may find
The wholeness that, enriching us, shall reach the whole of humankind.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: Mark 10:35-45

James and John ask Jesus to be allowed to sit at his right and left when Jesus enters glory. Then after assuring them that they will share in his suffering, Jesus teaches all the disciples that those who want to be great among his disciples must be the servant of all, just as Jesus came to serve and not be served.

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. "Teacher," they said, "there is something we want you to do for us."³⁶"What is it?" Jesus asked them. ³⁷They answered, "When you sit on your throne in your glorious Kingdom, we want you to let us sit with you, one at your right and one at your left."³⁸Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup of suffering that I must drink? Can you be baptized in the way I must be baptized?"

³⁹"We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup I must drink and be baptized in the way I must be baptized. ⁴⁰But I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right and

my left. It is God who will give these places to those for whom he has prepared them."

⁴¹When the other ten disciples heard about it, they became angry with James and John.

⁴²So Jesus called them all together to him and said, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the heathen have power over them, and the leaders have complete authority. ⁴³This, however, is not the way it is among you. If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of the rest; ⁴⁴and if one of you wants to be first, you must be the slave of all. ⁴⁵For even the Son of Man did not come to be served; he came to serve and to give his life to redeem many people."

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 offer our confession before God in reverent submission.

Lord God, it is hard for us to be modest, even in your presence. We are concerned with rank and position and putting forward a most confident image, but we remain truant from the school of service. We resent loftiness in our leaders but then think too much of ourselves. We like your salvation but this humility, it just isn't for us. Forgive us the sins we name. Save us from the sins we deny.

The Lord is our refuge, and we shall not be plagued with evil. God has appointed Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, our high priest. In his obedient suffering and death, Christ has become the source of eternal salvation. For his sake our sins are forgiven. With clean hearts we may follow and serve him.

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

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We could not approach you, O God, if not for the person of Jesus, our Lord, Savior, servant, and friend. His perfect love and life could have widened the gap between us and you, but instead he offered himself as the way to you, by living out the truth of your love. Accept our prayers and praise, our words of thanks for being able to approach you, O God, through your son, Jesus—the way, the truth and the life. May we live lives which honor and glorify you. Amen.

READING: Hebrews 5:1-10 *High priests offer gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people and deals with them gently, because the priest is aware of his own weakness. In the same way, Jesus was appointed by God and offered prayer for his life to God, who saved him. Now Jesus offers salvation to those who trust him.*

Every high priest is chosen from his fellow-men and appointed to serve God on their behalf, to offer sacrifices and offerings for sins. ²Since he himself is weak in many ways, he is able to be gentle with those who are ignorant and make mistakes. ³And because he is himself weak, he must offer sacrifices not only for the sins of the people but also for his own sins. ⁴No one chooses for himself the honor of being a high priest. It is only by God's call that one is made a high priest—just as Aaron was.

⁵In the same way, Christ did not take upon himself the honor of being a high priest.

Instead, God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

⁶He also said in another place, “You will be a priest forever, in the priestly order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In his life on earth Jesus made his prayers and requests with loud cries and tears to God, who could save him from death. Because he was humble and devoted, God heard him. ⁸But even though he was God's Son, he learned through his sufferings to be obedient. ⁹When he was made perfect, he became the source of salvation for all those who obey him, ¹⁰and God declared him to be high priest, in the priestly order of Melchizedek.

HYMN

“Stand by Me”

Burgundy # 198

When the storms of life are raging, stand by me;
When the storms of life are raging, stand by me;
When the world is pounding me like a ship upon the sea;
Lord who rulest wind and water, stand by me.

In the midst of faults and failures, stand by me;
In the midst of faults and failures, stand by me;
When I've done the best I can, and my friends misunderstand,
Thou who knows all about me, stand by me.

In the midst of persecution, stand by me;
In the midst of persecution, stand by me;
When my foes in war array undertake to stop my way,
Lord who saved Paul and Silas, stand by me.

When I'm growing old and feeble, stand by me;
When I'm growing old and feeble, stand by me;
When my life becomes a burden, and I'm nearing chilly Jordan,
O thou the Lily of the Valley, stand by me.

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SERMON - *“How shall I invest to be the G.O.A.T. and not be a B.O. What is expected? May faith invade every dark and despairing place and offer the light of hope, every hostile and divided place and offer the embrace of peace, every diseased and decaying place and offer the balm of wholeness.”*

***There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.***

Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work's in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all."

Don't ever be discouraged, for Jesus is your friend;
and if you lack for knowledge, he'll ne'er refuse to lend.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Lord of heaven and earth, you provide the perfect example of living your love in our world - your son, Jesus. You offer us healing and hope. You transform our lives from captives in sin to freedom to serve. Help us to place our trust in you, knowing that with you, wonderful things can be accomplished. In the bread and wine, encourage and strengthen us to live in your love. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Hear God's promise! Because you cling to me, I will deliver you; I will protect you because you acknowledge my name. You will call upon me and I will answer. I will be with you in times of trouble; I will deliver you and glorify you, and I will show you my salvation.

Wherever we go, we will live as servants of God.

Go from here and live with peace and confidence, knowing the grace of service in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ crucified and risen, the eternal love of God, and the living Holy Spirit who fills the faithful with many gifts is with you this day and for evermore.

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.

What does greatness mean? The readings this week confront us with God's greatness, but we are also faced with the greatness of the suffering servant who is persecuted and suffers for the sake of others. We see God's glory revealed in creation, but we also encounter God's glory in his rescue of those who cry out to God. We recognize the greatness of Jesus because he journeyed through suffering and is able to offer salvation. And we learn that those who are great in God's

Reign are those who are willing to be the servants of all – just as Jesus came not to be served but to serve.

The contrast between the God of creation and the suffering servant, Jesus, is a powerful way for the readings to address the question of greatness. While God has all the power and glory that the name implies, even God does not express God's greatness in domination and conquest. Rather, in the incarnation of Jesus, the glory and greatness of God is revealed through humility, service and the embrace of suffering.

For those who seek greatness on God's terms, we must expect that the same should be true for us – and this is exactly what Jesus taught. The challenge for us this week is to decide whether we can find the courage to define greatness in this way, AND, IF we can, to live as "great ones" in God's Reign.

In a world of reality television, it's tempting to define greatness, even in the church, by the world's terms. When we've "succeeded" – amassed lots of money or recognition or influence – then we consider ourselves great, and if we haven't managed to do this, we try to find ways to get it right. But, in this quest for universal exceptionalism, we've lost our souls, and the knowledge of true greatness. We've forgotten how significant it is for a struggling single mother to raise children to be responsible and generous. We've forgotten how powerful the influence of an attentive parent or grandparent can be. We've forgotten what a difference small acts of kindness and service can make to our neighborhood and community. We've even forgotten that the quest to be great in God's Reign can lead to the same competitiveness that the disciples experienced – even to the extent that we compare who is the "most serving" of us all!

Yet, the ultimate test of greatness is when greatness becomes irrelevant – when we no longer care about how we're seen, or what we've achieved, and we begin to live as humble servants simply because it's what we do, and it's one of the best ways to contribute to the healing of the world.

Ironically, the moment we stop seeking greatness or defining ourselves by the quest for greatness it is then that we become authentic followers of Christ, and that's when we become truly great, according to God's standard!

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