

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
EPIPHANY6 - CELEBRATING ILLUMINATION
Reverend John R. Hanson
February 13, 2022, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION - *How we choose to live has consequences. We have been given, in the Scriptures and in Christ's example, a picture of the kind of life that brings about greater wholeness and joy for those who live it. But we have also been given a picture of the pain that results when we reject God's ways. May we be led deeper into the way of Jesus' practical, world-changing ways.*

CALL to WORSHIP

"Glorify"

Celebration Singers

THEME AND VERSE

Happy are we when our treasures cannot be quantified; when our knowledge is tempered by mystery; when our pain is held in the balm of love; when our delight comes from beyond ourselves.

Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit.

HYMN

"Seek Ye First"

Blue # 783

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
And all these things shall be added unto you. Allelu, alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find;
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you. Allelu, alleluia.

We do not live by bread alone, but by ev'ry word
That proceeds from the mouth of God. Allelu, alleluia.

CCLI Song # 1352 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Luke 6:17-26

Jesus preaches to the crowds in Luke's version of the Beatitudes. Those who are poor, hungry, and who weep and are persecuted are blessed, while those who are rich, prosperous, laughing, and praised by the crowds are facing great sorrow.

¹⁷He came down with them and stood disciples and a great multitude of people
on a level place, with a great crowd of his from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of

Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. ¹⁹And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

²⁰Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

²¹"Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²²"Blessed are you when people hate you,

and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. ²⁴"But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵"Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶"Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather to worship

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

We have come into the inheritance of our Lord, but we have forgotten how to worship. Let us remember who our God is.

Merciful God, we can resist all things except temptation. We saturate our senses in search of comfort and pleasure. We attempt to rule our little kingdoms and control what should be shared with others. We seek the recognition of others for our sense of worth, but you are the source our true value. Forgive us for what we name; save us from what we hide.

Our inheritance is the faithfulness of God, who in grace and mercy gives to us our Lord Jesus, God's own son. For Christ's sake our sins are forgiven. In the trust and belief the Holy Spirit puts in our hearts, we may call upon his name for salvation.

To the glory of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON *"For you...I'll do my best!"*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Loving God, you are the ground of our being and the river of life; you steady our roots and draw them to seek the living waters. You are with us through hard seasons of summer heat and in the nights when winter's frost ices the landscape; your love warms and sustains us. You are everything to us. O let our gratitude be great and our praise be plentiful! Through Jesus Christ, your son. Amen!

READING: Jeremiah 17:5-10

Cursed are those who trust in human strength and turn away from God. They live in barrenness with no hope. But those who trust in God are like trees planted near a river. They have green leaves and bear lots of fruit.

Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. ⁶They shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. ⁷Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. ⁸They shall be like a tree planted by

water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought, it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. ⁹The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? ¹⁰I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

READING: 1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Some Corinthians say there is no resurrection. Paul points out that this means that then not even Christ has been resurrected, which means their faith is useless and as believers, are most to be pitied. But Christ has been raised and is the first of a great harvest.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; ¹⁴and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain, and your faith has been in vain. ¹⁵We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that

the dead are not raised. ¹⁶For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. ¹⁷If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. ¹⁹If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

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 gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, Earth and heav'n reflect thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring 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!

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SERMON: *What is a SUCCESSFUL LIFE? Consider the worldview against what God has offered us in Christ Jesus. Remember those who impacted you in their faithful living, for "if-then" you just might realize a richer, fuller life.*

HYMN

"Pass It On"

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around can warm up in its glowing.
That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it,
You spread his love to ev'ryone, you want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees are budding;
The birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming.
That's how it is with God's love once you've experienced it,

You want to sing it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.
I wish for you my friend this happiness that I've found,
You can depend on him, it matters not where you're bound.
I'll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know
The Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER FOR COMMUNION

"Lord, you are my refuge and my fortress, my God I will trust forever." Lord of all creation, all you have made is good and your love endures forever. You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts that we might be signs of your gracious presence to the world, for we receive the Christ, and we are free to live a godly life! Amen.

BENEDICTION & SENDING

Go now, confessing Christ as Lord in word and in actions. Worship and serve the Lord your God and no other. Tell the story of God's goodness, and trust in the Lord whose saving word is always with you.

As Christ has shown us, Amen.

May God instruct angels to guard you wherever you go; may Christ Jesus be your refuge and stronghold; and may the Holy Spirit lead you and put God's Word on your lips and in your heart. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

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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 central theme of all of the readings this week is the contrast between those who follow God's ways and those who don't. Jeremiah speaks of how those who turn away from God and trust in their own human strength are cursed, but those who trust in God are like trees planted near a river which are filled with life, green leaves and lots of fruit. In Luke Jesus speaks of how those who are poor, hungry, and weeping are blessed by God, while those who are rich, prosperous, laughing, and praised will experience woe. It is significant that Jesus' definition of blessing and curses, and what brings about those conditions, is very different from the Old Testament picture, or at least how those Old Testament pictures are usually interpreted. Finally, Paul compares those who believe in resurrection with those who don't, declaring that followers of Jesus who do not believe in a resurrection, or whose faith only has value for his life, are to be pitied, but those for whom resurrection is a reality, know that faith reaches beyond our current mortal life. Ultimately, all of these passages call us to a choice between trusting our own strength, wisdom, and ways of being, or embracing the way of Jesus.

On the local level, it can be very tempting to turn the choice in today's readings into a simple decision for or against Jesus. It would be a simple evangelical message that seeks a "decision for Christ" and brings people into the church. But to reduce today's message to this overly simple choice would be to do a great injustice to the Scriptures. We could choose, rather to offer a nuance and challenging choice. Not just a choice for Jesus, but a choice that calls us to choose what kind of Jesus we will follow. Will we make Jesus simply a good man who worked for the good of his society, and make following him simply about being good people? Or will we make Jesus a substitute who removes any guilt or responsibility from us and simply guarantees us a place in a future heaven?

Or – and hopefully this is what we will choose – do we recognize a Jesus who does the choosing and who does the connecting of us to the God who is the source of life, beauty, truth and goodness in the world, who offers us a future hope of a resurrection life that fills the cosmos, and who also calls us to engage daily in the tough work of living with kindness, compassion, justice, peace, generosity, and love now?

When we speak of blessing and curses, do we present them as God's actions, coming from outside of our human reality, and imposed on us by a distant deity? Or do we present them as consequences of how we live now with one another, and as the results of trusting that God's way really is the best way to move the entire universe a little closer each day to experiencing the fullness of resurrection life? I hope that we will have the courage to present the Gospel choice that is deeply challenging, transforming, and practical, while also being deeply spiritual and aware of the eternal purpose of God.

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