

July 4th, 2021 – Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God’s abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,

help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from
the ways**

of the world in which we live.

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

**We take offense at your teachings and your
ways.**

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:

in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, † the bread of life,
you are shown God’s mercy:

you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

God of the covenant, in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Ezekiel 2:1-5

¹[A voice] said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. ²And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. ³He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD.” ⁵Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

Children’s Message

Gospel – Mark 6:1-13

¹[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵And he could do no deed of power there,

except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

Jesus goes from his encounter with two characters whose way of acting, because of God’s grace and presence in their lives, is completely contrary to what we would expect from them, to his hometown of Nazareth.

We would expect a heroes welcome. We would expect that they had heard what the hometown boy, the son of the carpenter, had done, and that they would be excited to have him home. We’ve all got that story of the hometown hero that, if they have moved away, are the hero upon their return. Because everyone has heard of what they have done. And they are proud.

Jesus, however, doesn’t get this heroes welcome. In fact, it’s the exact opposite. They ONLY remember him for being Mary’s son – notice how they don’t refer to him as Joseph’s son, only Mary’s – which would have been their attempt and mocking him. “He is the carpenter, the son of Mary.” ...”and they took offense at him.” The word for offense could also be stumbled. They were *stumbled* by him. Literally tripping over themselves to justify to themselves that he is who they thought he was.

Who they knew Jesus to be, from whatever life was like with him as a young boy and then young man in Nazareth, was too great for them to believe he could be what he would become. And they cast him aside. God in flesh is among them, and they are unable to see beyond what they know – or think they know – to be able to experience what could be.

So he leaves.

And with this experience that he has just had, he teaches.

From this he sends out his disciples to go and do God’s work in the world. They are sent 2x2 and instructed to take nothing with them – no bag, staff, bread, money, and no extra tunic. “Take what you’ve got and go,” he tells them.

And he assures them that there will be places where they encounter and find a welcome. When those places are found, they are to enjoy that welcome until they leave. They are sent out with the assurance that this welcome would be found from place to place.

They are also told that it won’t always be that way. And, when THAT happens, when that welcome isn’t extended, to shake the dust off of your sandals and leave. Move along to the next place. There is more work to be done.

How do we do with situations like this?

Are we ready and willing to forget someone’s past and see them for who they’ve become, or are we, too, like those in Nazareth who can only see the Son of God as the carpenter that he was?

How about shaking the dust of a bad situation from our feet and moving along to the next thing, where there is work to do? Are we good at leaving our “baggage” behind and moving to the next thing?

We know the answer. These moments in life eat at us. We let them fester. And, we let them become the dominant narrative even when we HAVE moved on to what more there is to be done.

The truth is we are more like the people of Nazareth that we care to admit. What we seem to know, or think we know, of a person or situation, gets in the way of what that encounter could be.

Or...

Perhaps it is that we know it about ourselves. Maybe, just maybe, the people of Nazareth were not so much rejecting Jesus as much as they were rejecting themselves. Sure, it was easy to point out why it was that they couldn't possibly listen to him, but really their problems, their hurdles, the stumbling blocks, were with themselves.

"Has this man Jesus, whom we have heard about and is now teaching in our synagogue, really come from one of us, people of Nazareth? It can't be true!"

We so often think that we are the unworthy ones. We are the ones not able to be tasked with spreading the Good News of God's love. And, we are the ones not possibly worthy of receiving it.

Thankfully, along with telling his disciples to take nothing with them for their journey, he also gives them power. Yes, he gives them the fun power of casting demons, anointing and healing those who are sick, and curing folks...

But,

He also gives them the important task of calling all who would hear to repent. Repent of the ways you knew. Repent of the ways the world has told you things ought to be. Hear the good news.

This is a call and command that Jesus gives us, too. Not so much to go and call others to repent, but to call ourselves to repentance. Repent of the ways of what we knew, or thought we knew. Repent of the feelings of not being adequate. Repent of the thoughts of not being worthy.

For this is God's love. It is for everyone. And, as the Prophet Ezekiel says, "even the ones who don't receive the Good News of God's Love, will know the presence of love in their lives.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

God of all, through the waters of baptism you claim people of all races, ethnicities, and languages as your beloved children. Sustain the baptized and increase their faith, that your gospel may be proclaimed throughout the earth. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of the heavens, your creating Spirit animates the universe. We give you thanks for the moon and stars, for the planets and the Milky Way Galaxy, and for all of the mysteries of the cosmos that remain unknown to us.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of freedom, you have liberated us from sin and death and rescue us from all forms of spiritual, social, and political oppression. Defend us from tyrants in our midst and deliver us from all forms of slavery or corruption. Direct our freedom for works of liberation and wholeness. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of compassion, you became vulnerable in the person of Jesus Christ in solidarity with the disempowered. Strengthen those who feel faint, give courage to those who fear, and bring wholeness to those in need. We especially lift up *Jim Holte, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Kathy Smith, Joe Christensen, Marilee Julson, Bill Kuehn, Shirley Stark, Bob Kries, Bill and Betty Davey*. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of holiness, you send us out into the world to proclaim your love. We pray for our outreach ministries (*local ministries may be named*). Equip us as we leave this place to witness and serve our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We give you thanks that in every time and place you call forth prophets who move us towards freedom. Thank you for those who work for human rights, community organizers, and all who strive for liberty for all. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.

Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.

Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, “this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord’s Prayer

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
✠ be upon you now and forever.

Amen.

Go in peace, you are the body of Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Reminder: There will be no in-person worship at the church THIS Sunday. If you'd like to enjoy in-person worship this Sunday you are encouraged to head on down to Praise in the Park at Phoenix Park. Or you can catch Good Shepherd online.

Please sign up to attend in-person worship!

Join us for worship on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. in the pavilion area – bring your own picnic dinner. Or join us at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary on Sundays or at Phoenix Park at 10 a.m. Please call DeAnne in the office to get signed up for worship in the sanctuary.

News from Good Shepherd Outreach

This year Good Shepherd Outreach is partnering with other churches in We Care Eau Claire. This organization was created to support the Eau Claire School District staff and students – especially the students in need.

This year the distribution of school supplies and backpacks will be held August 16 at Phoenix Park, We are asking Good Shepherd members to help donate towards these school supplies with monetary donations so supplies can be purchased in bulk to stretch the monies as much as possible. **If you are interested in donating to Project Backpack, please send your donations to the church marked as such by July 21.** Or you can give online, selecting Outreach and in the memo add Project Backpack. If you have questions or interest in this event, contact the church office.

Outreach will also be taking care of the bill for Roosevelt School's Weekend Kids Meals (\$2040) with thanks to you for your donations.

Altar flowers

If you would like flowers on the altar in honor of a birthday, an anniversary, in memory of someone, or just because, please sign up on the flower chart on the bulletin board. The cost is \$22 and you can take them home following worship or the following week.

Sunshine Award

Congratulations to our great group of ladies for all the wonderful work they have been doing in our community. All through the pandemic they made sure anyone who called and needed items for their children, those needs were met. They continued to go through items that were donated and what they had and then they had a clothing give away early this spring. They have worked diligently this past year and are much deserving of this Sunshine Award! Nancy Davey also received an award for all she has helped with-thank you and congratulations!

Re-Connect Opportunities

We hope you will join us for any, or all, of these Re-Connect Opportunities throughout the week! Stop in for coffee and conversation at 9 am on Mondays. WEDNESDAYS be sure to stop by for Bible Study starting at 11, followed by Lunch and Laughter at noon. Thursdays we will have the sanctuary open for prayer for 8 am to 3 pm.

Thank you

We appreciate all of you who have been donating through online giving, as well as those mailing in their offerings.

The 3rd Quarter Well Offering / Mission Offering will be going to Outreach to help with costs for Weekend Kids Meals and Project Backpack (We Care Eau Claire).