

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 11

July 19, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

People: who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, so rule and govern our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that, ever mindful of Your final judgment, we may be stirred up to holiness of living here and dwell with You in perfect joy hereafter; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Isaiah 44:6–8*

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 8:18–27*

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For

who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the thirteenth chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus] put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.’” . . . Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the children of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

APOSTLES’ CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

SERMON “Idols, Israel, I, and Isaiah” Isaiah 44:6

- I. Build-A-Bear Workshop
 - What is the context that the Israelites find themselves in?
 - What does God need to remind them of?
- II. Idol building
 - Who are Bel/Marduk and Nebo?
 - What god(s) do you make?

III. Isaiah on Idols

- Isaiah says idols are...
 - P _____
 - N _____
 - C _____
 - Demons

IV. The True God (Isaiah 44:6)

- How do we see Isaiah 44:6 in Jesus?
- What is the problem with a god that *doesn't* die?

Back in 1997, Maxine Clark opened the first Build-A-Bear workshop at the Galleria Shopping Center in St. Louis, Missouri. Today, there are over 400 stores worldwide. We even have one in Roseville and at the Mall of America. It is a place I have been to many times with brothers, sisters, nephew, and daughter. If you have never been to Build-A-Bear, let me tell you the rules and how it goes. First, you choose from over 30 different types of stuffed animals, including not just bears, but also dogs, cats, bunnies, and sharks. They even have Disney themed animals! Once you pick your animal, you then stuff it, stitch it, fluff it, dress it, accessorize it, and name it! The end result is that you have your “berry” own bear! And, then, to prove it, you are given a customized birth certificate. This is your creation! Ta da! (and then comes checkout!)

In our Old Testament text, Israel finds herself in Babylon, exiled. The people are far from home and are living under a foreign power. Israel in Babylonian captivity wasn't building bears or stuffed animals; they were building gods! That is why God reminds them in our text, Isaiah 44:6, that there is only one God. He reminds that **“The LORD is the King of Israel and Redeemer, The Lord of Hosts, The First and the Last.”**

He says He is “the LORD,” the Almighty, Yahweh. He is the God of the covenant and the God of free and faithful grace. He is “the King of Israel.” The people might be living in Babylon, and they endured some poor, ineffective, and powerless kings in their country, but He is still their King and the true King of this world. He is the One Who is truly in charge! He is the “Redeemer.” He is the deliverer and Savior of His people, time and time again. He is the “Lord of Hosts.” “Hosts” means and refers to armies. To those who are living in a chaotic world of sin, danger, and heartache, God reminds us and them that He is in control over the forces and events that happen in Heaven and earth. He is “The First and the Last.” Nothing is before Him; nothing will be after Him. He is the Creator! This is the God of Israel. This is your God, and my God. There is no god besides this God. He is the solid Rock. All other gods are sinking sand!

But, because of their idolatry, the exiles were slow to believe these claims. Why? They were spending time in Babylonian build-a-god workshops, so to say. Isaiah describes the tools and the trade just a few verses later in 13 to 17. To make these gods, they use pencils, planes, compass, cutting tools, fire, precious metals and wood. They shape them into the figure of a man to dwell in the house. The wood they don't use for the fire to cook dinner, or to warm themselves, becomes the idol. See anything weird, here?

Isaiah tells us the names of these Babylonian gods in 46:1. They are “Bel” and “Nebo”. Bel is the title of the god Marduk. He was allegedly the “King of the Universe.” Nebo was the son of Marduk and, as the god of writing and wisdom, was keeper of the Tablets of Destiny. Babylonians believed Nebo gave them knowledge and understanding.

Just as Israel was slow to trust their God, we find ourselves in a similar plight. There is a part in all of us that delights in, shall we say, “creative craftsmanship.” We conceive it in our minds. We build it with our hands. We choose how it looks. We personalize it with our preferences. It's just what we want in a god. It's a god who likes what I like, hates what I hate, and who shares my opinions. It's a god who increases my standard of living and happiness. This is a god who gives me what I want and stays out of my way the rest of the time. John Calvin states that the human heart is a perpetual idol factory. Commenting on the First Commandment, Luther states in the Large Catechism that “Whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god.” All the sudden that doesn't look or seem like the Triune God, does it?

What are some of the idols that you and I are building? What do we put our heart and trust in? It can be our leaders, whether it be President Trump or Vice President Biden, and their philosophies and direction for the

country. It can be money, in how it can seemingly buy everything, whether happiness, health, home, or hobbies. It can be doctors with their wisdom and guidance, and the potential of a medication or treatment. It can be us, with our skills, talents, and abilities. It can be technology, and how it seemingly has an answer for everything, or will. Maybe it is people, vacations, our status or possessions. All of these things are good, and are gifts of God. What isn't "good" is how we sometimes use them, what we make with them.

Isaiah tells us the problem with idols. In 46:1, he calls idols '*atsabim*, which is translated in the ESV as "idols." Interestingly, the word also means "pain." For example, the word also appears in Genesis 3:16 to describe Eve's pain in childbearing, and it is again used in Genesis 3:17 to denote Adam's pain at working the ground, which is now cursed and full of thorns and thistles. Idols bring pain. Idols bring the same misery, heartache, and pain experienced by our first parents in the Garden of Eden!

Elsewhere, Isaiah calls idols '*epes*, which means "nothing." Isaiah maintains that those who follow idols believe in nothing of substance, care for nothing that matters, and seek to know nothing of importance. They find no purpose in nothing that lasts, live for nothing that endures, and remain alive because when it comes to something to die for, there is absolutely nothing. Why? They are created! They are powerless. They are nothing.

In the verse immediately after our text, the prophet continues by calling idols *tohu*. The Hebrew word *tohu* first appears in Genesis 1:2 to describe the world before God speaks it into existence. It says, "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep." Idols are embodiments of disorder and despair; they are formless and void. People addicted to them get lost in a sea of chaos, where God cannot be seen or heard. They are chaos.

But, why do idols have such power? Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 10:20 that idol worship is worship "offered to demons." Idols have such magnetizing power to imprison and take from us our God-given humanity because Satan is the spiritual reality behind every addiction, every compulsion, every obsession. It's no wonder David writes in Psalm 16:4, "The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply." So, what is the answer?

In the context of such massive idolatry, we have a Word from God: Isaiah 44:6: "**Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the first and the last; besides me there is no god.'**" Jesus is LORD, Yahweh, God in the flesh come for you and me! He is King, ruler of the Universe. Jesus is Your King Who died for you. He is Redeemer, the One Who delivers us from sin and helps in our time of need. He is the Lord of Hosts. He is in control of our lives, directing and leading them. What happens in our lives is and will be worked out for our good in Jesus (although it may not seem like it). He is the first and the last, Jesus says as much! In Revelation, He proclaims, "**Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.**"

Because Jesus bled and died in our place, Jesus alone demonstrates that He alone is able to heal our hurts, forgive our filth, and defeat our death. No wonder the Bible says that idols are nothing and chaos, and only increase our pain because a cross-less god is no god at all. A god who doesn't suffer, a god who knows no agony, a god who doesn't die-this is a god without grace, a god who cannot deliver, and a god who offers no hope and no future.

But that is not Jesus! He is crucified, but risen indeed! He is alive! So it is time to turn in our tools, stop building our substitutes, to throw away the idols, and never, ever do business again a build-a-god workshop. We have Jesus, the LORD, the King, the Redeemer, the LORD of Hosts, and the First and the Last. What else do we need?

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

**People: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER

People: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" LSB 575

1 My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name. Refrain

ref On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

2 When darkness veils His lovely face,
I rest on His unchanging grace;
In ev'ry high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil. Refrain

3 His oath, His covenant and blood
Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay. Refrain

4 When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh, may I then in Him be found,
Clothed in His righteousness alone,
Redeemed to stand before His throne! Refrain Text: Public domain

Acknowledgments

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *Rom. 8:18 – “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.”* It is very easy to get caught up in the present and lose track of our ultimate destiny in the Kingdom of God. St. Paul encourages us to keep eternity in mind. This certainly has an application to our support for the Gospel. If we keep our focus on “the glory to be revealed,” we will see our tithes and offerings in a new light.

LWR MASK SEWING PROJECT: The Social Ministries and Fellowship Committees are sponsoring a mask sewing project as part of the Lutheran World Relief 75,000 More! Face Mask Challenge which will deliver masks with International Personal Health Kits. Due to COVID-19 we are not able to get together to work on this project, however, we would like to encourage any home sewers to help. We are currently applying for a Thrivent Action Grant to help pay for materials and we will put together kits that will be available in August. Please watch the bulletin for more information. If you are interested in helping you can contact Marilyn Pierce: pierc019@umn.edu or Marie Garcia: elmaG98@aol.com.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “Reflexive Mercy” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. How do you react to the brokenness all around you? God gives His people the reflex to reflect His mercy in the world. (Exodus 32)