

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

February 7, 2021 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now” -Paul Manz
“From God the Father, Virgin-Born” -set. Mark Knickelbein

Words for meditation:

*From God the Father, virgin-born
To us the only Son came down;
By death the font to consecrate,
The faithful to regenerate.*

*To You, O Lord, all glory be
For this Your blest epiphany;
To God, whom all His hosts adore,
And Holy Spirit evermore.
Text: Public domain*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

People: But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Pastor: Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

People: Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. 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 Lord, keep Your family the Church continually in the true faith that, relying on the hope of Your heavenly grace, we may ever be defended by Your mighty power; 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 40:21–31*

Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness. Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, when he blows on them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like stubble. To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. Lift up

your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing. Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 9:16–27*

If I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward, but not of my own will, I am still entrusted with a stewardship. What then is my reward? That in my preaching I may present the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my right in the gospel. For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 1:29–39*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Immediately [Jesus] left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him. And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

Have you ever said, “Get with the program?” Has anyone ever uttered that phrase at you? I know that I have heard it many a time from my Grandmother, especially on vacation, as she kept us on a strict schedule to

go from one place to the next. “Get with the program.” It is a phrase that means, “Stick to the plan. Don’t deviate. Follow the pre-planned strategy.” It can also be the polite way of saying, “What are you thinking? Why are you doing things *that* way?” The phrase certainly makes you evaluate and consider what you are doing and how you conduct something. “Get with the program.”

That would be the summary of what Jesus and Peter say to each other at the end of our text. They have this exact conversation. The two men disagree on how Jesus should do His ministry, and how He should make God’s kingship effective and known. Peter in a sense tells Jesus, “You’re doing it all wrong! Why would you do it *that* way? I know how you should do it; listen to me. Get with the program, Jesus.” But Jesus says, “No, *you* don’t get it Peter. I have a specific way that I want it done. You get with the program, Peter.” What is the program of Jesus in Mark? How does He make God’s kingship known and effective?

Our text picks up where last week’s Gospel ended, and we see the continuation of Jesus’ long day of ministry on the Sabbath. Already on this Saturday, Jesus has taught in the synagogue and shown authority over a demon. His day isn’t even close to being over, yet. It is about to get much longer. Mark records that immediately after Jesus leaves the synagogue that He is confronted with another issue. As Jesus enters into the house of Peter and Andrew, He is immediately told about Peter’s mother-in-law. The situation is dire and they go to the only person who can help: Jesus.

Peter’s mother-in-law is apparently not doing very well, and she is lying ill with a fever. Fevers often show a serious illness or infection. Remember, they have don’t have ibuprofen or Advil to help. Can you imagine how powerless, or hopeless, you would feel? How scary would that be? Once Jesus hears about her and her situation, He takes action. Mark records, “**And He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.**” Jesus shows His power and authority over the fever, and she is made well. His simple touch will do. The woman’s recovery is so remarkable that she begins to serve Jesus and the others in the house. Often, it takes us time to recover once our fevers break, right? Often, the last thing we would want to do after that is physical activity, but not her. Her recovery is amazing, and she responds in thankfulness.

Unfortunately for Jesus, though, His day is not close to being over. Mark says the sun goes down and the Sabbath ends. One commentator interestingly says, “The darkness which followed sundown was not simply literal. It summarized the spiritual and physical condition of a creation corrupted by sin. This was the world into which Jesus was beginning His ministry.” He is right. As Peter answers the knock at his door, he finds people suffering and devastated by sin and its effects. He finds the sick and demon oppressed. They are looking for Jesus, and the help that only He can give. We see the power and authority of Jesus at work again, as many are healed, and demons are cast out. Nothing is too much for Jesus. There is nothing that He doesn’t have power over.

As the darkness gets thicker, and as eyelids grow weaker, the crowd disperses, and everyone in the house goes to sleep. Under the cover of night, Jesus sneaks out to a desolate place to pray. In the morning, no one knows where He is. Peter and the others begin to search for him. The word for search that is used here is *katadioko*. It is translated here as *searched*, but it has a far more sinister meaning. This is the only time it is used in the New Testament, but is used 84 times in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. There it has extremely negative connotations. There it is used for chasing somebody down, persecuting someone, hunting someone down, and following someone with malicious intent. It doesn’t seem like they are just searching for Jesus. It seems they are upset with Him. They wonder how He could just leave them when there is this great opportunity. There are more people to be healed, more demons to be cast out. Everyone is looking for him. Why isn’t He taking advantage of this golden opportunity to further His ministry by healing, and casting out demons. Why doesn’t He build on this opportunity and popularity? In other words, “Get with the program, Jesus. Come back! **Everyone is looking for you!**”

Jesus has something else in mind. He has a different program that He wants to enact. in mind. He has a different way in how God’s kingship is to be made effective and known. He answers them: “**Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.**” Jesus states His mission clearly. He came to preach. He has not come to heal diseases or to cast out demons for a select few in certain places. He has come to preach, and to preach to more and more people.

It is unfortunate that in our in our day that the word “preach” can often denote a sort of moralistic beratement. We are familiar with the phrases, “Don’t preach at me.” “There she goes preaching again.” Or the

ultimate jab, “Practice what you preach.” But the word, “preach,” *kerrusso*, means “to announce,” “to proclaim out loud,” or “make known.” Jesus has come to make an announcement. What does He announce? In 1:15, He says, **“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.”** He has come to forgive, restore, comfort, encourage, save, and fulfill. He has come to break the darkness.

As the Son of God and Lord over all creation, Jesus was demonstrating His authority and kingship in this text, and demonstrations like this continued throughout His ministry. They would culminate in the ultimate sign of His Lordship on Easter morning, as He rises triumphantly from the dead. The angelic announcement: **“He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”** provides life and salvation that exceeded the temporary healings and exorcisms described in our reading.

But, you know what, the world is still dark. It is still filled with disease. The devil and his minions still tempt and torment. An old hymn inspired by this text captures the darkness well. See where you are mentioned. It goes: “For some are sick, and some are sad, and some have never loved Thee well, and some have lost the love they had/And some are pressed with worldly care, and some are tried with sinful doubt; and some such grievous passions tear, that only Thou canst cast them out/ And some have found the world is vain, Yet from the world they break not free; And some have friends who give them pain, Yet have not sought a friend in Thee/ And none, O Lord, have perfect rest, For none are wholly free from sin; And they who fain would serve Thee best Are conscious most of wrong within.” It hits close to home, doesn’t it? Is your love waning, or are you struck with doubt? Has the world dealt you a tough hand that you want to give back? Is family life less than ideal, and not as advertised? Is sin disturbing your conscience? The world is still dark, isn’t it?

But, remember, what is the program of Jesus? He preaches! He announces! He proclaims! And what does He say? **“I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”** We will face persecutions and hardships, but our Lord has triumphed over them through His death and resurrection. They don’t have the last word, but Jesus does. He announces, **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”** He has won a peace for us with God that stills our consciences, calms our hearts, and that makes us right with Him. Jesus proclaims, **“I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”** Best of all, Revelation 21:5 says, **“Behold, I am making all things new.”**

As many of you know, my sister Kaitlin was hospitalized for six months straight before she passed away. She suffered from a severe case of pneumonia, ARDS, a staff infection, and some strokes. Had she survived, she never would have been able to walk again, or breathe on her own. She would have the raspy voice that comes from a trach, and would require constant round the clock care. This is all assuming that her cancer would have been cured. We have a Savior who will one day raise the dead and who will make all things new, well, right, and good. There are times when all we can do is look ahead to that joyous pronouncement and continue on in our Lord’s promise and victory. **“Behold, I am making all things new.”** We have a Lord who bore our sickness, pain, infirmities, wounds, and sin, and who promises to make all things new by His death and resurrection in the new heaven and new earth.

As Jesus began His ministry, it is a comfort that He stuck to *His* program. **“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”** Our Lord’s preaching continues, and the announcement goes forth. He continues to come to town after town, even ours.

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.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION “Blessed Jesus, at Thy Word” -J. S. Bach

Words for meditation:

Blessèd Jesus, at Your Word

We are gathered all to hear You.

Let our hearts and souls be stirred

Now to seek and love and fear You,

By Your teachings, sweet and holy,

Drawn from earth to love You solely.

Text: Public domain

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 right and proper for us to give You thanks, heavenly Father, for in Your great love You sent Your only-begotten Son into this world of sin and death and made Him to be sin in our place and to die the death we deserve. He offered His life on the cross for our forgiveness and was raised to life again that we may have eternal life. We give You thanks for the victory for all people and nations and for calling us to faith by the power of Your Holy Spirit. 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 pow’r and might:

Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.

Hosanna. Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross. Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

In dismissing the communicants, the following is said:

Pastor: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart in peace.

People: Amen.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION "Houston" -Wayne L. Wold

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Words for meditation:

I want to walk as a child of the light

I want to follow Jesus

God set the stars to give light to the world

The star of my life is Jesus

In Him there is no darkness at all

The night and the day are both alike

The Lamb is the light of the city of God

Shine in my heart Lord Jesus

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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.

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 “Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing” *LSB* 528

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace! | 5 Look unto Him, ye nations; own
Your God, ye fallen race.
Look and be saved through faith alone,
Be justified by grace. |
| 2 My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of Thy name. | 6 See all your sins on Jesus laid;
The Lamb of God was slain.
His soul was once an off’ring made
For ev’ry soul of man. |
| 3 Jesus! The name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
’Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
’Tis life and health and peace. | 7 To God all glory, praise, and love
Be now and ever giv’n
By saints below and saints above,
The Church in earth and heav’n. |
| 4 He breaks the pow’r of canceled sin;
He sets the pris’ner free.
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me. | Text: Public domain |

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BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *1 Corinthians 9:25* -- “Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable.” Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit – for the desires of the flesh are at war with the desires of the Spirit. Having received the new life in Christ by his grace, he now calls us to follow him deliberately, with self-control, with intention.

PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY: Wednesdays at 2:15 p.m. we will have a prayer and Bible Study group. Each week, we will gather together to pray and study a text. We will be meeting in-person and virtually. For those that attend virtually, we will have you join us via Zoom (contact Pastor Kooi for the link). Please contact Pastor Kooi for more details.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “Shines and Saves” Guest Speaker: Rev. Cody Cooper. Jesus surpasses all expectations as we see Him revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Mark 9:2-13)