

## Pentecost #3

6/21/2020

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### Celebrate (Introduction)

“God does not promise that the path of the disciples will be easy. Jeremiah feels the pain of rejection from those who do not want to hear what he has to say. Jesus declares that his words may bring stark division. Even so, we need not be afraid for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death, God’s grace and love make us a new creation each day. Marked with the cross and filled with holy food, we are sent from worship to witness to Christ in the world.”

Opening Hymn: [“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”](#)

### Psalm 69:7-18

It is for your sake that I have borne reproach,  
that shame has covered my face.

<sup>8</sup> I have become a stranger to my kindred,  
an alien to my mother’s children.

<sup>9</sup> It is zeal for your house that has consumed me;  
the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.

<sup>10</sup> When I humbled my soul with fasting,<sup>[a]</sup>  
they insulted me for doing so.

<sup>11</sup> When I made sackcloth my clothing,  
I became a byword to them.

<sup>12</sup> I am the subject of gossip for those who sit in the gate,  
and the drunkards make songs about me.

<sup>13</sup> But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord.

At an acceptable time, O God,  
in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me.

With your faithful help <sup>14</sup> rescue me  
from sinking in the mire;

let me be delivered from my enemies  
and from the deep waters.

<sup>15</sup> Do not let the flood sweep over me,  
or the deep swallow me up,  
or the Pit close its mouth over me.

<sup>16</sup> Answer me, O Lord, for your steadfast love is good;  
according to your abundant mercy, turn to me.

<sup>17</sup> Do not hide your face from your servant,  
for I am in distress—make haste to answer me.

<sup>18</sup> Draw near to me, redeem me,  
set me free because of my enemies.

**Hymn of Praise:** [“For the Beauty of the Earth”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Jeremiah 20:7-13](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Romans 6:1-11](#)

**The Gospel:** [Matthew 10:24-39](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** [“Amazing Grace”](#)

**The Message:** ([Video](#))

Over the past few months I have enjoyed the time to be outdoors doing yard work and at times just observing nature around me. I watched birds building nests and then saw the mother bird sit on her eggs until they hatched. Then it was the parents going back and forth searching for food and feeding the young open mouths. Finally, watching the fledgling birds take their first flight while the parents were there to protect and encourage them. I also observed a rabbit locate the right place for her nest and latter saw the young bunnies hopping about the lawn. Even more miraculous and amazing is planting a small seed, watching it first breaking ground and then growing into a mature plant yielding its flower or producing its fruit. It all was so amazing and beautiful. Everything seemed to be in peaceful harmony until the realization that the cute bunny or the newly hatched birds may become the victim of a fox or a bird of prey.

In all of the seeming beauty and wonder of nature there is the reality that there is that which we would rather not think about. The truth is that life feeds upon life. There is a food chain within all living creatures. Man was created to be on top of this food chain. It is clear that in nature all living things are not created equal. There is definitely the reality of the survival of the fittest. The ancient story relates that God said to man, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth,”

But what about man, does the same hold true? Have we been created to live under the system inequality? We are told that mankind was created in God’s image. If we believe this to be true, then all human beings are created equal. There is no distinction made within humanity. It is of man’s making to categorize people so as to make some kind of survival of the fittest mentality.

This is to allow some to dominate over others and in reality feed off of them. This has been the case throughout recorded history. It was clearly evident in the Dark and Middle Ages during which the feudal system clearly made the distinction among people. You were born into an inescapable caste or category of economic and social distinction. The rich lived off the backs of the poor or peasants.

Not too much has changed in today's world. We live in a society that still categorizes people into different classes - upper, middle, and low. This system operates under the same historic principle – the upper class feeds off of the lower classes. To further add to the categorization we create racial, ethnic and religious categories so that such divisions strengthen the dominance by the few. Therefore, in many ways we have been able to emulate nature in that we promote the dominance of man over his fellow human being. Therein is inequality and is man's creation and not God's.

Our gospel lesson this morning clearly speaks to this reality. In preparing His disciples to go out into the world to help proclaim His message, Jesus set forth some ground rules, "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master." In saying this Jesus recognized the human ego has the desire to think of himself or herself as knowing more than the other person or being better than anybody else. Jesus told His disciples not to fall into the trap of thinking of themselves above others. In addition they were not to succumb to those who would try to deny them of their their beliefs with fear tactics.

Jesus was clear in saying that whatever category or whatever bias or prejudice society creates in order to enhance egos through false and unjust actions, God's will is just the opposite. Let me be absolutely clear, Jesus was not about establishing or endorsing any particular political, economic, or societal system. What He clearly was saying that within the systems which man creates they must be lived under God's system of love for one another. There is no injustice or inequality when love for one another is the cornerstone of everyday living. Even though there maybe economic, ethnic, racial, or religious differences, everybody must promote the equality of humanity while living together. We all are created by God as His children.

We pray "Our Father," we do not pray just "My Father" but "Our Father." This means that if we believe in God as a loving God who created us then we are all equal in God's eyes for He is Father and God of us all. Today we recognize the love of our fathers and how they have loved and cherished us. God, our Father, loves us even more and never treats us unjustly or with bias. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows both sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father, And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."

As our earthly fathers teach us about life and the consequences we may face for our actions, Jesus did the same with His followers. Jesus though forewarned His disciples that love and doing good just may run contrary to the reality within the world in which we live. In fact God's message of love may undermine society's inequities and injustices which society has supported.

In this way trying to live this love of God for everyone may bring strife and discord. That is just a reality. To bring love when there is hatred and bitterness is to call for change and change may be a threat to one's unjust way of living, one's prejudices, and one's ego. Change never comes easy and often in the process may even be painful, even though the change for justice and equality is out of love. Those who stand for the cause of love may just face the brunt of persecution themselves. It is almost like when a father often becomes the target of anger when he disciplines his child out of love.

This is the reality of life but Jesus promises that just like the fallen sparrow the life we live is not unseen by God. He promised "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven." We have been given life in which we always have the choice to live this life as being in God's image or denying God's image. To live in His image is to be like the loving father who loves his children equally without bias or prejudice. Today we live at a juncture in history wherein we find out who we are in light of being a child of a loving God. We now come face to face with praying "Our Father" and then living the fact He is the Father of us all no matter what that takes. The question becomes, how will we respond?

**The Anthem:** ["To Believe"](#) 10 year old Jackie Evancho

### **The Prayer**

Father of us all, we come to you seeking wisdom and understanding in order to be your emissaries during this time of turmoil. Give us the courage and strength to meet the challenges of injustice and inequality through the love you have shown us. Let us be your arm of compassion in order to alleviate the suffering which so many have lived as a result of inherent prejudices. During this time of social crisis we are still suffering from the health crisis of the pandemic. Instill in us the wisdom to see the reality of this health crisis beyond our self-interests and desires. Bring comfort and healing to those who have been overcome by this deadly disease. Give the leaders of the world the courage to make the right decisions of having the well-being of their citizens as their first concern.

On this special day we ask for your blessing upon all fathers so that their love may continue to be an example to their children. Give them the courage in order to make the best decisions out of love and compassion for their families.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, Billy Jean Eddy & family, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, Darrell Garrison, the John Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Terre Rones, Paul Sagal, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

**The Lord's Prayer**

The Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine upon you;

The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters

Live on knowing God's love,

The joy of living this life of love,

And the peace which only come through the power of His presence within you.

So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

**Closing Hymn:** ["Faith of Our Fathers"](#)

\*Offering to be sent to:

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