

Lent #5

3-21-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor
Vicar Karen Pugatch

Celebrate (Introduction)

“God promises Jeremiah that a “new covenant” will be made in the future: a covenant that will allow all the people to know God by heart. The church sees this promise fulfilled in Christ, who draws all people to himself when he is lifted up on the cross. Our baptismal covenant draws us to God’s heart through Christ and draws God’s love and truth into our hearts. We join together in worship, sharing in word, song, and meal, and leave strengthened to share God’s love with all the world.”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Opening Hymn: [“O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-12

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love;
according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
and done that which is evil in thy sight,
so that thou art justified in thy sentence
and blameless in thy judgment.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

⁶ Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Fill^{me} me with joy and gladness;
let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide thy face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right^{me} spirit within me.

¹¹ Cast me not away from thy presence,
and take not thy holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of thy salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

Hymn of Praise: [“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God, with steadfast love you draw us to yourself, and in mercy you receive our prayers. Strengthen us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that through life and death we may live in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

2nd Reading: [Hebrews 5:5-10](#)

The Gospel: [John 12:20-33](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Beneath the Cross of Jesus”](#)

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

The old saying “Be careful, you just may get what you wish for” is a saying which sounds totally out-of-touch with the real world. After all, if it is something which is wished for then it must be good or else we would never wish for it. There have been several studies of people who have won big money in various lotteries. All too often these people who had wished to win and had won found out years later the truth in another old saying “It is not what it’s cracked up to be.” Many have ended up being just plain miserable for the money changed their lives so much that they couldn’t find the happiness which they formerly had experienced. The old was taken away from them replaced by something strange and foreign – their new lives suddenly became enslaved to wealth.

Many times wishes are made with blinders for they only see what appear to be the obvious advantages. Wishes often are made because of the window dressings and not what is actually behind those curtains. Again the old saying “All that glitters is not gold.” Therefore with just what appears to be the obvious is the basis of the wish. If the wish comes true then the curtains are opened to reveal something never wished for. But by that time it is too late and we end up having to deal with the circumstances or at best the disappointment. Even the demands may turn out to be far greater than we ever thought and the rewards far different than expected.

Every time I am on-line, on social media or watching TV, I am reminded of how the advertising world plays upon the development and fulfillment of wishes. All of these advertisements make their product look to be the best thing to come along since rain that ends

a prolonged drought .They make it look like your life will be so much better if you only buy their gismo or cure-all medical remedy. They even may state a ridiculous low price. It is so easy to fall for their pitch. You need not leave your house. You order on line and it is delivered to you. But without seeing the product first in real life, you just may be disappointed or taken by a con scheme. The saying “Be careful” applies.

Now this was ultimately the case two thousand years ago for some Greeks who had gone to Jerusalem. They most likely were traveling away from their home as often Greeks did (tourists if you please). According to some historians Greeks seemed to have a real desire to travel and experience other lands and people. This particular group of Greeks was in Jerusalem perhaps to experience for themselves what compelled so many Jews to make a pilgrimage to that city during what was known as the Feast of the Passover. It would have been quite a spectacle since it is believed over a million Jews would have crowded in and around that city. This is not to say that the temple in and of itself could very well have been a tourist attraction of the day. They just may wanted to see for themselves as it was on their bucket list.

Regardless they were there experiencing all that was going on. Needless to say they were aware of the news which was circulating among the Jews during that particular week. They must have heard about a man named Jesus who was reported to have raised a man who had been dead for four days. So many had witnessed this event that it was hard not to believe that it was true. They must have thought what sort of miracle worker is this. They also heard people talking that this very well could be the long awaited Jewish Messiah who would become the King of the Jews. Many believed that His arrival in Jerusalem would mark the beginning of a revolution which would over-throw the Romans and establish a free and independent Israel which would take its rightful place among the nations of the world. The excitement must have drawn the Greek visitors’ attention especially when they heard about or even may have been witnesses to this new King’s entrance into the city.

Being curious they naturally wanted to meet this new leader among leaders. Isn’t this the natural impulse of mankind. There is always that desire to meet and rub shoulders with the rich, powerful, and famous. To have been able to meet in person such an up-and-coming world figure, who even had the power over death, compelled these Greeks to seek out Jesus. This could very well be the moment of a lifetime for them. Therefore they sought out one of the closes associates of this Jesus, one of His disciples named Philip. Why Philip? Perhaps it was because of his Greek name, but that is speculation. In any case, they appealed to Philip “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” They made their wish known. Of course, the why is that they saw the glitter of a famous person totally unaware what was behind this worldly glitter.

Philip first took the request to Andrew. They decided to go to Jesus to see if it would be okay. Jesus reaction seemed to be totally evasive to the request. But he was not evasive at all. Now be careful about getting what you wished for since your wish may come true and your expectations totally unfounded. Disappointment would be the reality of your wish. The Greeks were seeking one thing as were the Jews and even the disciples but Jesus said the reality is something far from what they wanted or wished for. Instead of a forthcoming coronation of a

King they would be confronted with the witnessing of a suffering servant, a whole different kind of king. Did they really want to talk with a man under the sentence of a cruel death. Would they want to hear, no less understand, what was to happen and why. Could they fathom Jesus' words, "Those who love their life lose it and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." In asking to see this Jesus did they really want to follow Him especially when that road would be a road of suffering and not the worldly glory that they sought, "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also."

Andrew and Philip must have looked at each other and said what in the world is he talking about. We just asked Him the simple request of some Greeks and now this which even we cannot really understand. Jesus was in no mood to see these foreigners especially when he continued to talk about the turmoil within himself as seen in his prayer "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say – 'Father, save me from this hour?' No it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." The crowd of would be followers of the new Messiah heard this and must have been puzzled also especially when a voice came from heaven "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The voice was like thunder to some and an angel to others. But to all it was not what they wished to hear for it was a message of death and suffering and not the celebration of a King.

This was the answer to the Greeks wish. "Be careful for that which you wish." If you want to see me because of the earthly glory you expect to receive, your wish will only be a waste of time. The glory I give is not that of this world but the glory found in an everlasting life. To follow me means losing the desires of fame and fortune in this life and sacrificing oneself for the good of others. This is the sacrifice of the cross which Jesus was pointing to as His immediate future. The kingdom of which Jesus referred in His ministry was not an earthly Kingdom at all but the Kingdom of God beyond the confines of time and space.

Therefore Jesus answer to the group of Greeks was you are barking up the wrong tree if you think I am about some worldly person of glorification. I have a much better promise for those who give of themselves in God's love for "Whoever serves me, the Father will honor." This is the ultimate glory which can be experienced for it is the glory of the eternal experience of God's love.

Many of us may "Wish to see Jesus" but when push comes to shove and we hear what such a wish implies we may just regret we had ever asked for it may take us away from our destructive egos, political agendas, and false beliefs. Our wishes may just be contrary to that of Jesus message. But to those who follow through with living the truth of the reality of Jesus message and life, their wish to see Jesus will bring the eternal glory of being in His loving presence. It is the spiritual kingdom which begins now when living God's love. Amen.

Anthem: ["Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" - The Mormon Tabernacle Choir](#)

Offering*: ([On-Line Giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

The Prayer:

With the dawning of spring O God, our lives are awakening to experience the beauty of new life in your creation. Each new day will bring forth the miracles of your creation. For this experience and for the life you have given us so that we may share in this wondrous new life, we give you thanks. Instill in us the will and understanding that we are to protect your creation and not destroy it. Now let the new life of spring enliven us to live the joy of sharing the new life of love which you have shown us.

We continue to face the perils of the pandemic. Although there is the promise of being able to overcome its devastating effects, it is still with us. Give us the perseverance to continue to follow the precautionary guidelines so that even though some have been inoculated, herd immunity is not yet a reality. We still need to show our love for others and get beyond any politics which may have come into being. Hopefully, we pray that increasing numbers will become vaccinated so that life can begin to return to normal. Continue to give the medical community the wisdom and strength to care for those who have been overcome by this life threatening virus. We remember all those who have lost their lives to Covid-19 and continue to ask for your comforting presence with their loved ones.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Della Mae Strobel, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Vicki and Christian Zanartu, Pastor Jack, 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 comes through the power of His presence within you.
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

Closing Hymn: ["When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"](#)

Hopefully, soon we will resume in person services – stay tuned. The online worship experiences will continue as well as the Midweek Thoughts.

*Offering to be sent to:

Bob Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Road
Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church
9122 Sybert Drive
Columbia Hills
Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291

The Easter Sunrise Service will be held on the Broadway Pier, Fell's Point, 6:30 AM. Masks and social distancing will be required.