

Pentecost #11

8-8-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Jesus says that the bread he gives for the life of the world is his flesh, and whoever eats this bread has eternal life now and will be raised on the last day. In Ephesians Paul tells us what this life Jesus gives us looks like, this life we live as marked with the seal of the Holy Spirit in baptism. We live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. The whole purpose of life is giving yourself for the other.”

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

Opening Hymn: [“Awake, My Soul, and with the Sun”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 34:1-8

“I will bless the Lord at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together!
⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your^a faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶ This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.
⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!”

Hymn of Praise: [“Give to Our God Immortal Praise”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“Gracious God, your blessed Son came down from heaven to be the true bread that gives life to the world. Give us this bread always, that he may live in us and we in him, and that strengthened by this food, we may live as his body in the world, through Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [1 Kings 19:4-8](#)

2nd Reading: [Ephesians 4:35-5:2](#)

The Gospel: [John 6:35,41-51](#)

Hymn of the Day: ["O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts"](#)

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

Several weeks ago I shared with you a story about a 30 year old singer who appeared on America's Got Talent. If you recall, Jane Marczewski, whose stage name is Nightbirde, suffered from reoccurring cancer since 2017. Her AGT appearance was made after her partial recovery from her last round of treatment of which she was deemed to be at that time clear of her cancer. But by the time of her performance she had been again diagnosed with cancer in three parts of her body and given only 2 percent chance of living. Even with that Jane's positive outlook was not only reflected in the song she wrote and sang, "It's OK", but in her glowing happy appearance. In response to Simon Cowell she said, "You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy," Her appearance was an inspiration to millions for her performance has received over 30 million views on Youtube.

Monday she made the announcement that she is dropping out of the AGT competition. She wrote, "Sharing my heart with the world on AGT has been an honor and a dream come true. My point of view this summer has been astounding. What a miracle that the pain I've walked through can be reworked into beauty that makes people all over the world open their eyes wider. Since my audition, my health has taken a turn for the worse and the fight with cancer is demanding all my energy and attention. I am so sad to announce that I won't be able to continue forward on this season of AGT." She ended, with "Thank you for all your support, it means the world to me. Stay with me, I'll be better soon. I'm planning my future, not my legacy. Pretty beat up, but I've still got dreams." She has had many interviews in one she stated "Don't deny the pain of today but don't deny the hope of the future, both are real." Just this past Wednesday she gave a live TV interview in which she still remained upbeat and positive to life itself with the message of never deny hope.

There is little doubt that in today's world caught up in fear, uncertainty, and a sense of hopelessness that the life and message of a person who is suffering so much but is still loving life and living hope for tomorrow is drawing so much attention. Her reason for auditioning for AGT was to share this message of hope in terms which people can understand. As the host on AGT said to her "You are the voice which people need to hear this year."

This voice which brings meaning and purpose to life is the basis for Paul's thoughts in today's lesson. He states this in this way, "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." To live in this love on the surface sounds easy. But being human we have all kinds of pitfalls and

traps that lure us and entrap us throughout all of our lives. Even those who seem to be the textbook example to live by do not escape their humanity. This is especially true when confronted with hard times and difficult choices. Nightbirde's story is filled with such times as well as each of us when we become honest with ourselves. But the key is to understand that God's spirit is there within us and to allow this spirit to become a vital part of our lives.

Often this takes the witness of someone at some point in our lives, to bring this spirit of love, hope, and meaning as a part of who we are. On a personal note, I know that you have heard me tell this story before but it illustrates that a witness given does not have to be an entertainer before an audience of millions. It can be a person of no notoriety or even status in terms of society. When I was about four years old a Sunday school teacher had us memorize this quote from Ephesians, "Be ye kind one to another." Out of all the quotes I had to memorize throughout my life these few simple words took root and have kept reappearing in my mind all these years. This is not to say that too many times they have gone unheeded. But these simple words would always come forth in my mind bringing me back to the reality that I was and am capable to violate them by my actions and words. On the other hand I found that I had the capacity to live this compassion to the point of being able to accept forgiveness as well as to forgive.

"Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you." These words of Paul are not only a part of my life but are the heart and core of Paul's message to the church at Ephesus and the basic words for each member of the Body of Christ to cherish and live. In living these few simple understandable word or at least attempt to live them, is what the life in Christ is all about especially in troubled times like today. This is not a pie in the sky theological word game or proposition. These are down to earth words to live by which even the youngest of children and the oldest of seniors can understand and adapt into their life and lifetime relationships.

Living these words gives us the ability to overcome all those negative thoughts that come to us when our pride and egos may want to lead us to bitterness and revenge, to despise and hate, to denigrate and ignore, or to cause suffering and pain. Just listen to what Paul says that these few words overcome. "So putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as they have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal of redemption. Put away for you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice...."

To say the least one would think Paul is writing directly to us in our fragmented, bitter, and hateful society. Paul's simple solution in order to overcome these human frailties and hurtful actions is that there must be something that is most powerful to take control of our humanity. This something is accepting the reality of God's presence within our lives. This is the presence

which allows us to understand that we are His children whom He loves and is constantly there with His forgiving embrace. It is this acceptance of being His children that we can begin to let those few little words become a motivational force within us – “Be ye kind one to another....” But not only that, it gives us the will and desire to be “...tenderhearted, forgiving one another....” We do this because we have the reality of God’s presence and love as the example “... as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

What a blessing this is for we no longer have to live the consequences of guilt and the pain of knowing the hurt which is all too easy to perpetrate upon others. To know that we are forgiven gives us that renewed spirit to live the kindness and tenderheartedness which we are capable of living. It is living this life that gives us the joy and hope of facing another new day, the next minute, the next hour, or the next year no matter the trials of life. We are grateful to Nightbirde for her timely witness to this as well as Paul’s simple command.

Paul concludes, “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” It is a simple message which can give us a lifetime of joy, hope, and may I add which has given me great moments and experiences in life as well as times of humility. I am always deeply grateful to that Sunday school teacher so many years ago for the gift she gave me.

Let this be a lesson to us all. Just like that Sunday school teacher, and a virtually unknown singer caught up in one of life’s tragedies, we have the capacity to help give the true meaning of life to someone traveling in this difficult and troubling time. It is such a simple message which does not even have to be said but which can be imprinted upon one’s life by the experience we give to someone else. This is the experience of love or just simply put, being kind one to another. This is what changes the world.

Anthem: [“Love Divine All Loves Excelling” 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

Most loving Father of us all, we are extremely grateful for all those in our lives who have been a powerful positive influence on us. They have given us the words or action which we needed to hear and receive. In so many ways they have become a vital part of who we are. In so many cases they never received the thanks which they deserve. Let our lives be a witness to their kindness and love. This love is reinforced by the love you have shown us through your Son. Give us the will and perseverance to be a living witness to His love. Today we especially pray for one

of your children who has been a powerful witness to millions, Jane Marczewski, Nightbirde. She needs your healing and comforting presence.

Many of your children are suffering today not only from the pandemic but also for tragic and devastating wildfires, floods, famine and droughts. Protect and comfort your suffering children and bring them relief and strength to face their future.

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, Charles Larsen, 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,, Della , Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, 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: ["Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak"](#)

Announcements

Services will be outdoors unless inclement weather conditions force us indoors. Face masks and social distancing outdoors are not required. An email will be sent late Saturday afternoons stating whether indoors or outdoors.

*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