

# Pentecost #19

10-3-2021

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## Celebrate (Introduction)

“Today’s gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus’ saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God’s law. Jesus’ rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?”

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

**Opening Hymn:** [“Word of God, Come Down on Earth”](#)

**Psalm:** Psalm 8

“O Lord, our Lord,  
how majestic is thy name in all the earth!  
Thou whose glory above the heavens is chanted  
2 by the mouth of babes and infants,  
thou hast founded a bulwark because of thy foes,  
to still the enemy and the avenger.  
3 When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,  
the moon and the stars which thou hast established;  
4 what is man that thou art mindful of him,  
and the son of man that thou dost care for him?  
5 Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
and dost crown him with glory and honor.  
6 Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;  
thou hast put all things under his feet,  
7 all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
8 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.  
9 O Lord, our Lord,  
how majestic is thy name in all the earth!”

**Hymn of Praise:** [“Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise”](#)

## Prayer of the Day

“Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Genesis 2:18-24](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12](#)

**The Gospel:** [Mark 10:2-16](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** [“Break Now the Bread of Life”](#)

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

A common human trait, especially as we grow older, is to long for “The good ole’ days.” It is very natural to look back in time with the tendency to only remember, or care to remember, those good things of days gone by. In this process we like to overlook those things which were not so good or even damaging to the good of ourselves and society. Tragically in seeking power there are those who play upon the notion to return to the so called “Good ole’ days” no matter who may have been hurt by such irrational notions. Mark Twain was correct when he stated “You can’t go home again.”

But yet people still look back to the past years through rose colored glasses. I found this to be very true in giving walking tours and lectures about the history of Fell’s Point and colonial Maryland. Their minds and eyes were confronted with what life was actually like through the earlier years of our nation and not just the fantasies of their longing of the past. To hear about those who traveled and entered into new frontiers, forging for themselves new lives, seems so exciting and adventurous at first. It is so easy to be caught up in romanticizing that we overlook what being a pioneer was and is really like. It was not at all that glamorous life. Often those who participated in my historic events would say, I never really thought about that and said no thanks” to going back.

These pioneers of the past not only faced the dangers of the unknown, they also faced the hardship of physically and mentally surviving. Often they faced going hungry and without water, enduring sickness, extreme heat, and the bitter cold without shelter. They could go days and weeks on end without being able to bathe. America for instance is full of family histories which had ancestors who had to endure the hardships of being a pioneer traveling and settling in unknown territories as they adventured deeper and deeper inland.

It is often overlooked that almost all our ancestors were once pioneers for they traveled across the ocean into what they considered to be an unknown life in the new world. Upon and until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this was certainly true if our ancestors came to the new world. They were truly pioneers. Like other pioneers they faced extreme hardships and sacrifice so that they would pass on a better life for their children and the generations which followed. The journey across the great pond took 45 to 60 days in ships no bigger than 100 -125 feet long carrying 200 or more passengers. In the year of 1848 alone nearly 50,000 people died coming across the

great pond in these coffin ships. When they arrived they often faced extremely crowded living conditions, servitude, joblessness, and prejudice.

To be a pioneer is not only to have the excitement of discovering and forging new territories and avenues of life but it had a price to be paid. Sacrifice and even hardship are more often than not a reality of being a pioneer. The rewards of the sacrifice and hardship may never be realized by the pioneer but are endured in order that future generations may be rewarded with a better life. There is example after example of this throughout history.

A great illustration of this is the story of Moses who set out as a pioneer leading a nation of people to a promised land. The journey was full of the unknown, hardships, and sacrifices. Although the goal of his pioneering leadership was to be fulfilled by his people, he never was allowed to experience the reward of all his efforts. Also, many of the prophets were pioneers in that they were the ones to introduce a new kingdom which would be under the leadership of a new Messiah. They were pioneers trailblazing the path which gave hope to a defeated people. In proclaiming such a message they often bore hardship and sacrifice. They themselves would not realize this Messiah in their lifetime. Future generations would receive the reward of their message for the Messiah would be a pioneer to lead all future generations to the ultimate reward of the eternal kingdom of God.

Mankind couldn't comprehend this new kingdom for it was a kingdom beyond that which they have the capacity to control or govern. This kingdom was beyond the mortal into the realm of the eternal spirit of life under God's domain. This is the nature of humanity for its kingdom is that of the physical world. The writer of Hebrews related, "What are humans that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them? You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor subjecting all things under their feet." But the writer of Hebrews continues: "Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control." This means that even the eternal kingdom of God is within the grasp of mankind but human beings needed to be led along the path to this unknown eternity of life upon the end of the mortal life. Without that trailblazer or pioneer to lead people the eternal kingdom would be seen as inaccessible to mankind. That was not God's purpose for His creation.

Therefore, the pioneer to be the trailblazer to this eternal kingdom had to be of God for it is only God who has that capacity to control, govern, and understand life in its entirety. Yet this trailblazer had to be of man in order for man to understand not only the reality of this unknown eternal life but the way to access or realize it. This is why Jesus. "As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." God had to relate the totality of the eternal nature of creation and life to man through the terms of humanity.

I have often used my experience I had with an ant hill to illustrate what is known as the incarnation. One summer on a hillside of a summer camp I attended as a youth, I came across a

large ant hill which must have been about a foot or more high and a couple of feet in diameter. It was a bright sunny day. I went close to it to observe the ants as they were scurrying up and down the hill and into and out of their domain. As I got closer I accidentally cast a shadow over the hill and with the sudden change of light the ants must have become frightened so they all headed into the hill for safety. I then moved so my shadow no longer was upon the hill and soon the ants reappeared. I thought to myself that I was not going to harm those ants but how could I communicate this to them. Well the only way I could have possibly done this was to become an ant myself.

This is what we are talking about with God. In order to fulfill His will for creation and to give the insight into the eternal nature of life and the limitations of death, he had to become man thus escaping the realm of the eternal into the realm of mankind. This He did through Jesus. "It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering." Suffering the pain of mortality, death, was necessary for mankind to understand that life need not be mortal but there was the reality of immortality of the soul. So the death of Jesus and the cross was the very reason for Jesus' life and that was the revelation of eternal life through the empty tomb and the resurrection.

He came and suffered that life of a pioneer so that we may know that we can experience being one with God in His eternal kingdom. "For the one who sanctifies (Jesus), and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying. 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'" Jesus is the pioneer who leads us to a new life now and forever. In return we are to be that pioneer who blazes the trail for others so that they too may enter that life of being one with each other and one with the eternal kingdom of God. This means that we must never seek to live in the past but we must constantly look to the future by being trailblazers in seeking solutions to the problems of the present. Future generations are depending on us to make those decisions and sacrifices which will give them life. Life moves forward and in order to be a vital part of its being we must progress with it by living the love which God has shown us.

**Anthem:** ["It is Well With My Soul" 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**

Eternal Father, All too often we may look to the past as being some kind of utopia to which we would like to return. Grant us the wisdom to see the past as a learning experience for our present lives which prepares us for the future. Always may we be mindful that our lives lay the

groundwork for future generations. We pray for the willpower and ability to be that strong foundation for life in the world of tomorrow.

Ever present God, life is filled with surprises some of which we may find to be of our liking and some which are trials which we find difficult to live through. Presently we are still living through the trials of a continuing pandemic. Many have experienced the pain of being isolated and lonely over the past months and are fearful that this experience may return with this resurgence of the virus. Grant us the wisdom to find ways to overcome this fear and be able to return to some kind of normalcy. As a church, may we find a renewed spirit in order to reach out to each other and to the world in which we live with the warmth of compassion and love. In this may we find that your presence is ever with us and that we are never alone.

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: ["Spread, Oh, Spread, Thy Mighty Word"](#)

### **Announcement**

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](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)