

# Pentecost #20

10-10-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

## **Celebrate (Introduction)**

“The rich man who comes to ask Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life is a good man, sincere in his asking. Mark’s gospel is alone in saying that Jesus looked on him and loved him. Put of love, not as judgment, Jesus offers him an open door to life: sell all you own and give it to the poor. Our culture bombards us with the message that we will find life by consuming. Our assemblies counter this message with the invitation to find life by divesting for the sake of the other.”

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

**Opening Hymn:** [“Lord Jesus, Think on Me”](#)

**Psalm:** Psalm 90:12-17

<sup>12</sup> “So teach us to number our days  
that we may get a heart of wisdom.

<sup>13</sup> Return, O Lord! How long?  
Have pity on thy servants!

<sup>14</sup> Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love,  
that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

<sup>15</sup> Make us glad as many days as thou hast afflicted us,  
and as many years as we have seen evil.

<sup>16</sup> Let thy work be manifest to thy servants,  
and thy glorious power to their children.

<sup>17</sup> Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and establish thou the work of our hands upon us,  
yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.”

**Hymn of Praise:** [“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”](#)

## **Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us your gift of faith, that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to what lies ahead, we may follow the way of your commandments and receive the crown of everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Amos 5:6-7, 10-15](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Hebrews 4:12-16](#)

**The Gospel:** [Mark 10:17-31](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** [“O Jesus, I have Promised”](#)

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

Once upon a time there was a very wealthy nation. The wealth was quite evident for it displayed its extravagance in extremely luxurious ways. The wealthy had large homes adorned with the most elegant trappings well beyond what they needed. They dined in the most bountiful way with feasts fit for kings. The wealthy had the best of everything. Although a minority, they were the elite in society which led others to see their nation as wealthy in every way.

There was enough wealth for everybody to share but tragically this was not the case. Even though there was great wealth, a majority of the people lived a day to day existence with extreme poverty among them. The truth was that the wealthy lived off the working and poor people while giving them little to nothing in which to live in return. Of course it was the wealthy who held the power and therefore justice was as they determined. This led to inequities in the justice system which turned a blind eye to the rich and severity in penalties to the poor. In the true sense of the word righteousness was nowhere to be found especially in the life of the powerful,

Hate filled the lives of the people because truth was replaced with lies which led to people to believe lies about each other. Those with the wealth and power remained in their position in life by denying those who were righteous and ransoming them by taking bribes, Throughout it all those who were righteous remained silent for they were overwhelmed by the evil of the time. Those who know history might just ask, “How long would such a nation survive?” Sooner or later that nation had to face disaster.

Perhaps you may be able to relate to this description as being one in which we are experiencing today, But this was the description of the Northern Kingdom of Israel some 2700 years ago during the time of great prosperity under King Jeroboam II. It was during this time that the prophet Amos lived and prophesied. It is he who gave us this description.

<sup>10</sup> Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,  
They hate the one who reproves in the gate,  
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore because you trample on the poor  
and take from them levies of grain,  
you have built houses of hewn stone,  
but you shall not live in them;  
you have planted pleasant vineyards,  
but you shall not drink their wine.

<sup>12</sup>For I know how many are your transgressions,  
and how great are your sins—  
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,  
and push aside the needy in the gate.  
<sup>13</sup>Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;  
for it is an evil time.

Amos like many of the prophets did not sugar coat reality but clearly stated the truth no matter what others thought about him. He like the other prophets called for the people to change or else reap the results which were so often damning. Amos minced no words when he said, “Seek the Lord and live, or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it”.

Clearly Amos saw a corrupt, unjust society headed for complete disaster. “He will break out against the house of Joseph like fire....” The house of Joseph was the current reign of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Unfortunately like so many prophets, Amos’ warning fell on deaf ears for the people did not heed his warning. In fact they saw the wealthy as being rewarded by following God’s laws. Within a few years the Kingdom fell.

It is no mystery that those in power and wealth well beyond their own needs never want to hear the truth or want to be confronted by the needs of the real world about them. Of course they never want to hear the solutions to the needs of the world and the inequality and injustice of the system they are a part of. Therefore, they not only tune out these realities but reject any solutions to remedy the problems which any prophet may give since it may involve tapping into their wealth and power.

Amos presented a way to avoid disaster:

<sup>14</sup>Seek good and not evil,  
that you may live;  
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,  
just as you have said.  
<sup>15</sup>Hate evil and love good,  
and establish justice in the gate;  
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,  
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.  
and bring righteousness to the ground!

Yes, words to live by – seek good not evil. This should be common sense but to those with the power and wealth good was only in terms of how it may further advantage them. Evil would be that which may hinder their prestigious life. Thus terms like good and evil are relative to one’s life and the truth which they hold is totally corrupted into good is really evil and evil is really good. Thereby these terms are totally irrelevant because they have lost their meaning. Tragically they may not have only lost their meaning among the powerful and wealthy but have

lost their true meaning among the common people because they have fallen into the trap of believing the powerful voices of so-called authorities.

Amos also called to establish justice. To do this would bring everyone to the same level by living under the same standards and rules in life. It would level the playing field giving no one the advantage over anyone else. This totally undermined those who maintain their position in life at the expense of others. True justice is governed by love and without love justice becomes manipulative and corrupt. Through it all righteousness must become the deep will and life to live as the ground of being. Righteousness must become a reality for life to have any sense of justice, equality, and harmony.

The truth is that Amos' prophecy flies in the face of what the Hebrews and even many who identify themselves as Christians truly believe. This prophecy went against the theology that God rewards those who follow him with earthly wealth and power. Therefore the wealthy and powerful were held and are held in high esteem because it was and is thought that they had been rewarded by God because their life had found favor in His sight. Their lives exemplified to those who believed this reward system what the religious life was. All of what they said and did was seen as true and righteous even though in reality it corrupted truth and righteousness. In other words, they were looked upon as not being able to do no harm. This of course leads to truth becoming lies and lies becoming truth as being the accepted reality throughout society. In light of this Amos' words had no chance of being accepted as truth. The result was the kingdom fell.

Jesus ran into dealing with this same theology of wealth rewards when confronted by the rich man who wanted to be reassured about his entrance into eternal life. He already thought he knew he had found favor with God because of his wealth. He even had followed all of the commandments, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Then Jesus hit the very core of the man's life. "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

Jesus then left everyone including his disciples totally bewildered for he went contrary to what they had believed and taught. "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They responded "Then who can be saved?" To this was the response that salvation comes only through God not one's earthly wealth nor any kind of bribe.

It is quite clear that Peter had fallen into the trap of seeing Jesus as the person to lead them into some kind of earthly rewards. "Look, we have left everything and followed you." He could have continued "now what do we get in return?" That clearly was his thinking. Jesus' response, like throughout his total ministry, went beyond earthly values into the new values of the spiritual world. By following Him the experiences would be far more rewarding and meaningful than that which the world's value system can give. These values are to be founded in the rewards received by love and would be culminated in God's eternal reward Jesus then

concludes that the first in the material values of humanity will be last in the eternal eyes of God but the last in these in earthly value will be first.

To look upon the prophecy of Amos and the words of Jesus to the rich man and to Peter is not only a look into today's tumultuous times but to help us to open our eyes to why we have been given the gift of life and the example of God's love. It is quite evident that our society needs the values which come with sharing this message of love, compassion, and forgiveness. In this the truths which are found in the prophets of old and within Jesus will come alive and the rewards will be overwhelming. These are the truths which we must live and pass on to future generations.

**Anthem:** ["Give of the Best to the Master"](#)

**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**

Almighty God, Our lives are constantly being challenged by the many temptations and pitfalls of life. It is so easy to fall prey to them for they are so alluring. In pursuing them they lead us on a journey which becomes so self-centered that we overlook that we may be hurting someone along the way. We may even turn a blind eye to those who may need our help. Constantly be by our side as a reminder to always see life through the eyes of love and compassion. Give us the will to reach out and share the bounties of our lives with those in need.

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:** ["O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate"](#)

**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)