

Epiphany #4

1-30-2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“The glory of God is often revealed when and where it is least expected. God uses our lips to declare that glory, inexperience and hesitant though they may be. God uses our love to demonstrate that glory and so urges us to exercise it. God uses Jesus of Nazareth, water and the word, bread and wine, to reveal God’s glory where and when God chooses. Take heed, lest the glory of God slip through our midst unnoticed.”

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

Opening Hymn: “O Day of Rest and Gladness”

Psalmody: Psalm 71:1-6

“In thee, O Lord, do I take refuge;
let me never be put to shame!
²In thy righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline thy ear to me, and save me!
³Be thou to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress,^[a] to save me,
for thou art my rock and my fortress.
⁴Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
⁵For thou, O Lord, art my hope,
my trust, O Lord, from my youth.
⁶Upon thee I have leaned from my birth;
thou art he who took me from my mother’s womb.
My praise is continually of thee.”

Hymn of Praise: “Give to Our God Immortal Praise”

Prayer of the Day

“Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Jeremiah 1:4-10](#)

2nd Reading: [1 Corinthians 13:1-13](#)

The Gospel: [Luke 4:21-30](#)

Hymn: [O Jesus, I Have Promised](#)

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

The test of a true leader is to welcome that position during difficult and troubling times no matter if is in a community organization, business, church, or government. Even though the leader is chosen to bring solutions to whatever problem may be occurring, the challenge is that there are always those who refuse to accept the truth. They let their personal bias, egos, and mindsets rationalize in order to block the truth from being confronted. In fact they become so wrapped up in themselves that they rather let the organization or institution die or at best become totally irrelevant. Tragically in my lifetime I have felt the pain of being a part of organizations which totally lost their purpose becoming an ego trip for a few. They lost the truth of their purpose.

Any true leader in such circumstances will not bow to the false notions which may threaten what is needed to bring resolve. In doing so his leadership takes the chance of having to be denied and cast aside which may spell doom for them in the long run. The fact is that we have always had a love – hate relationship with our leaders but truth was almost always recognized. Today that relationship is dominated by hate which denies any truth which may be promoted. When truth is denied there is no future. Tragically our society is suffering from this plague and we will continually suffer the consequences.

This is a message that no one likes to hear and face. Many choose to rather close their minds to the truth, try to ignore reality, and continue down the merry path of fantasy. The bearer of the message are often seen as misguided and ill-informed and are to blame. This is nothing new. In colonial times where there was an active town crier to proclaim the news which came to him or her. If the news, although true, was not to the liking of the people they were known to beat up and even tar and feather the news bearer. Therefore, in some areas the town crier had to be very diplomatic as to how he or she proclaimed the news. If they had any integrity and proclaimed the truth they had to face the consequences or no longer be believed when the news was bad.

In some ways this was the story of the prophets of old. The Prophet was God's messenger who was given the gift of being able to see the truth of what was happening in the world in which he lived in light of God's message of life. He was called by God to do this but with the realization of the repercussions' God called the prophet Jeremiah, who was evidently young at the time, "but the Lord said to me, 'do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord'" Herein lies the reality that God knows the truth will most likely cause pain and be rejected along with the messenger.

Although the prophet may have been rejected, the truth of the matter is that the ultimate price to be paid fell upon those who rejected the truth. After the fall of Jerusalem, the Hebrews in

exile began to worship the foreign gods against the warning of Jeremiah. Therefore God spoke through Jeremiah, "Yet I sent to you all my servants the prophets saying 'I beg you not to do this abominable thing which I hate!' But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their wickedness and make no offerings to other gods,...Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: I am determined to bring disaster on you, to bring all of Judah to an end."

The prophet like the town crier of old not only proclaimed bad news which the people rejected but also proclaimed the good news of hope. For instance Jeremiah at the end of his life prophesied that Babylonia would fall and the vision was that Jerusalem would be restored. "Babylon must fall for the slain of Israel, as the slain of all the earth have fallen because of Babylon. Remember the Lord in a distant land, and let Jerusalem come into your mind." Despite the good news or hope given, by enlarge the life of the prophet only found glory in retrospect.

This brings us to the disturbing story of Jesus in our gospel lesson this morning. The setting was one which could have been very much a celebration. Here was Jesus who was just in the beginning of his ministry. He had become known throughout the region. Luke relates, "Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone." With this growing notoriety he came home to His hometown of Nazareth. Everything was in place to celebrate a hometown boy becoming successful.

The stage was set for a joyous return. He went to the synagogue and was given the honor to read from the scroll. He was given the scroll of the prophecy of Isaiah from which He read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." After finishing the reading he announced to his hometown, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." This revelation of who He really was took the people by surprise, after all, they had known Jesus and His family for all the years while He was growing up. They knew Him as a carpenter, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" But up until now everything found favor with His home folks.

But then He continued "Doubtless you will quote to me the proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!'" Which then He interprets as meaning that the people would now ask Him, "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did in Capernaum." To this Jesus saw that they were seeking hometown privileges which limited Him. Jesus saw this as further diminishing the fact of who He was leading to unwanted, ramifications. He then made this shocking but very true statement. "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown." This is true since the prophet would speak the truth and the truth may not have been what he had been taught growing up. The truth might just be against what they believed. He revealed the truth when He said that the prophets would often not answer the needs of his fellow Jews but would answer the needs of foreigners, non-Jews. This was blasphemy for no Jew would reject their own and then meet the needs of a non-Jew especially the revered prophets. Saying that God's Spiritual powers through the prophets were for all the world was a blatant lie for most of the people although Jesus' accounting was true.

They didn't want to hear this especially from one of their own. Enraged by this heresy, "They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way." They were blinded to the truth, their mind fixed, and not even willing to hear the truth which was being told them. Eventually he would pay the price.

The price He paid would not be in vain for truth does not die even though we wish at times it would do so. With the resurrection the message of Jesus would live on and be proclaimed. The truth of His message that God's children were Jew and gentile alike will live on because this message is founded in love. Paul states in his remarkable love chapter, "But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end." He continues "for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

In all the vast confusion amidst all that may divide us the one truth that we have is that love is the one thing which will unite us for love does not divide. We are assured of this for we know that God's revelation to us is that He is a God of love and it is this love which brings us life and not hate and destruction - a dead end street. It is through the truth of living love which will give us hope for the future. We must stand firm in this truth even though there may be a price to be paid.

Anthem: ["Lead Me Lord"](#)

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

Ever loving God, may our hearts and minds always be open to answer the call to set forth the example of love no matter the consequences. Never let us deny the truth in all circumstances in which we find ourselves. Never let us shy from being that leading example of truth amidst times of turbulence and despair. Let us always be cognizant of your comforting presence and wisdom. Give us the insight into life so that we may make a difference when called to witness to the truth.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Eugene Ash, Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, Leo Dickel, Dotty Gibson, Kraig Greff, Nancy Griebel, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, David Kieffer, Pam Lambert, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, the McNamara family, Jane Marczewski, Wendy

Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Brenda Penyak, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Esther and Buck Trautwein,, 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: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Announcements

Please note that Masks are required while in the church building.

*Offering to be sent to
Robert Brackbill
10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane
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/#/tithe/give-one-time/2627291