

## Epiphany #5

2-6-2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

### Celebrate (Introduction)

“The fifth Sunday after Epiphany continues to highlight unlikely instruments and circumstances appointed to reveal God’s glory. ‘Who will go for us?’ God asks. A person of unclean lips, a former prosecutor of the church, and three fishermen who couldn’t catch a thing. More surprising still, perhaps, is that we are also called.”

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”](#)

### Psalmody: Psalm 138

“I give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing thy praise;

<sup>2</sup>I bow down toward thy holy temple  
and give thanks to thy name for thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness;  
for thou hast exalted above everything  
thy name and thy word.<sup>(a)</sup>

<sup>3</sup>On the day I called, thou didst answer me,  
my strength of soul thou didst increase.<sup>(a)</sup>

<sup>4</sup>All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,  
for they have heard the words of thy mouth;

<sup>5</sup>and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,  
for great is the glory of the Lord.

<sup>6</sup>For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;  
but the haughty he knows from afar.

<sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
thou dost preserve my life;  
thou dost stretch out thy hand against the wrath of my enemies,  
and thy right hand delivers me.

<sup>8</sup>The Lord will fulfil his purpose for me;  
thy steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.  
Do not forsake the work of thy hands.”

Hymn of Praise: [“Now We Join In Celebration”](#)

### Prayer of the Day

“Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Isaiah 6:1-13](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)

**The Gospel:** [Luke 5:1-11](#)

**Hymn:** ["For the Bread Which You Have Broken"](#)

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

Life is full of unexpected surprises and events. We all have experienced them for they are very much a part of life. One of the greatest Indian musical composers and singers, Ilaiyaraaja, once said, "Life is not what you expect: it is made up of the most unexpected twists and turns." These unexpected twists and turns can be so dramatic that they can actually change the course of one's life. Tragically in some cases like the sudden death of a loved one, the unexpected end of a love relationship, the loss of a job, or a tragedy which destroys one's home and possessions, devastating sickness. Can leave lasting scars on our lives. But they also can be seen as a reality life and although still within our being, can move us onto a new chapter in our lives. It brings to mind the old saying life is what you make of it or "When given lemons, make lemonade." In my 84 years I have experienced the full spectrum of unexpected life changing events but have found out that it is how you view life as to how you move on. Of course you have heard me say many times in every negative there is a positive. I can look to the fire which destroyed my home and business which eventually brought me to Epiphany.

Unexpected events need not be negative for they can be very positive. Some may bring momentary joy and happiness while others bring meaningful life changes. This is the case which is evident within all, three of our lessons this morning. The unexpected in each case brought about drastic life changes to some people who you would not expect to be in such situations. In two of the stories were people you would least expect to have been placed in a prominent role in God's view of life.

The first reading from Isaiah, there was no surprise that he was chosen by God to be His spokesman or prophet for Isaiah was born into an elite family but the event was unsuspecting. While in the temple, Isaiah had a vision of God's messengers. With this vision Isaiah accounted that he was most unworthy of this unexpected visit, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" He was then cleansed by one of the seraphs by means of a live coal upon his lips with the words, "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." You now have no excuse. It was then that the Lord brought this very unexpected life changing words, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It is then that this unexpected experience would not only bring the life changing response from Isaiah but would mean His entrance into the history of the Hebrews. "Here am I; send me!" He then received the prophecy of doom to a sinful people

This unexpected moment in the life of Isaiah would not only be a life changing moment for him but also for the Israelites. They would be confronted with a prophecy which would reflect who

they were and the resulting consequences of their straying from their God, but also in the long run give them hope. There is little doubt that this unexpected moment in the life of a very unsuspecting Isaiah would dramatically affect the history of the Hebrew people during a most tumultuous and dangerous time. The words of the Psalmist could very well reflect this prophet, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe; you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me. You will make good your purpose for me...." Isaiah went on to be considered one of the greatest of all the prophets. Certainly his influence spread through several generations. He and his call were totally unexpected but extremely life changing.

Next is the story of the unexpected call of three of the most unlikely people by Jesus. They were hard working fishermen who spend long hours at their occupations. It was an occupation which demanded physical strength, and endurance. The seas made them rugged and determined. On this particular day they had cast their nets all night but caught nothing so that were onshore during the day mending their nets and preparing for the next day. That day Jesus was by the lake of Gennesaret. A crowd had gathered to hear Jesus tell them the word of God. They pressed to get closer and closer to him. He saw two empty boats at the shore line of which one of them belonged to Simon, one of the fishermen. He got into the boat and asked Simon to anchor the boat a little way from the shoreline. Thereupon, he sat down and began to teach the crowd.

When he had finished speaking the unexpected event would begin to occur. He told Simon "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch," Now you can imagine what Simon was thinking especially after a long night and day work. What does this itinerate preacher know about fishing? We were just out there. So Simon replied "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing, yet if you say so. I will let down the nets"" You can imagine the total skepticism in the fisherman's mind. Then the unexpected event happened which would led these fisherman to change their lives. You know the story their nets became overloaded with fish so much so they had to call for the other fishermen to bring their boat to help. Never before had Peter seen such an occurrence. He was caught totally by surprise and engulf with amazement that he fell down before Jesus with almost the same reaction that Isaiah showed. "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" His partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were there and participated in this miracle catch just stood in amazement.

The unexpected event involving some of the most unlikely people for they were just common working folk then concluded. Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." It is interesting to note that Jesus call was personally directed to Simon yet his partners James and John also thought it was for them for we read, "when they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him." These unlikely men who unexpectedly had their life changed by a miracle which they experienced became the inner circle of those who were called to be Jesus' disciples. They would be the ones to help spread the message which they had been taught by Jesus.

Finally, we come to Paul and His statement in our epistle lesson this morning. After stating the appearance and call of those who followed Jesus when He walked the earth, Paul recounts perhaps the most unlikely person to ever be called by Jesus happened as at most unlikely time in his life. "Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me." Now like Isaiah and Simon Peter, he comes to the admission of his most sinful life, "For I am the least of the apostles,

because I persecuted the church of God.” Paul is the best example of how God choose the least expected person to be His follower and special messenger to the world.

Paul, whose name was changed from Saul, was an extremely devote Jew of the Pharisaic tradition He was so devout that he saw the new Jesus movement as heresy which led him to persecute the early Christians. After seizing and imprisoning many Christians in and around Jerusalem he sought permission to go to Damascus to weed out the followers of the way, Christians, in the synagogues there. On his way to Damascus a most unexpected event happened. Upon approaching the city we are told, “...suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?’ He asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ the reply came, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’”

This most unexpected event would dramatically change the life of Saul even to changing his name to Paul. Instead of being a zealot in persecuting Christianity he would become a zealot in spreading Christianity throughout the Gentile world. God saw in this most unlikely zealot the potential to be that energetic, committed person to have an understanding of Jesus’ message even beyond that of the original apostles. With knowing who he was, he continued “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and do you have come to believe.

The call of Isaiah, the disciples, and Paul lead us to understand that no matter who we may be or think we may be we must always be ready for that unexpected time when we may be called to make that witness to the message of God’s love for all. This is especially important to us at this time of turmoil for we are being called right now to live and witness to that message of God’s forgiving love, Even if we believe we are the most unlikely candidate, the call will come and most likely at an unexpected time and place. Will we be ready to recognize it and answer it?

**Anthem:** [“Here I am Lord” St. Lillian Choir and Orchestra](#)

**Offering\*:** (On-Line giving Link) [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)

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 present God, we live amidst turmoil and threats upon our health and well-being. During such times we need to know that you are there with us. May we ever be aware of this presence as well as the guidance which only you can give. Let us not only be aware of your word during these times but to act upon the wisdom which you have share not only in the present but throughout time. Strengthen us in order to proclaim and live the truth of this wisdom.

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 Marzewski, 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:** ["Take My Life, That I May Be"](#)

### **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  
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