

Lent #2

3-13-2022

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Though we sometimes doubt and often resist God’s desire to protect and save us, our God persists. In holy baptism, God’s people have been called and gathered into a God-initiated relationship that will endure. Lent provides the church with a time and a tradition in which to seek God’s face again. Lent provides another occasion to behold the God of our salvation in the face of the Blessed One who ‘comes in the name of the Lord.’”

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”](#)

Psalmody: Psalm 27

“The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold¹ of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

² When evildoers assail me,
uttering slanders against me,²
my adversaries and foes,
they shall stumble and fall.

³ Though a host encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war arise against me,
yet I will be confident.

⁴ One thing have I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.

⁵ For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent,
he will set me high upon a rock.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!

⁸ Thou hast said, “Seek ye my face.”

My heart says to thee,

“Thy face, Lord, do I seek.”

⁹ Hide not thy face from me.

Turn not thy servant away in anger,
thou who hast been my help.

Cast me not off, forsake me not,
O God of my salvation!
¹⁰ For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
but the Lord will take me up.
¹¹ Teach me thy way, O Lord;
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
¹² Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they breathe out violence.
¹³ I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living!
¹⁴ Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
yea, wait for the Lord!"

Hymn of Praise: ["My God, How Wonderful Thou Art"](#)

Prayer of the Day

"God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promised everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen."

1st Reading: [Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18](#)

2nd Reading: [Philippians 3:17-4:1](#)

The Gospel: [Luke 13:31-35](#)

Hymn: ["Restore In Us, O God"](#)

The Message: ([Video](#))

If you are like me, all too often, I find myself not thinking deep enough leading me to make generalizations about people, experiences, things, and events. That is the easy way out for it takes no real insight or research. Very often generalizations are made in order to support what we may think or believe. This is all too true in politics and even religion. To fall into the trap of making generalizations is often to deny the truth and thereby perhaps inadvertently support or tell a lie. This is the basis of propaganda which at this time is running rampant throughout the world and within our society. Dictators are particularly adept in searching all avenues of generalizations which turn out to be false or at best half-truths.. Some Radio talk hosts and some TV commentators are extremely good at spewing half-truths and make their living by them. Social; media is full of generalizations half-truths and blatant lies. Therefore, we are all

too familiar with the outcome of such shallow, incomplete, untruthful, and misguided information for us to sort through.

To be the object of generalizations can be extremely hurtful and demoralizing. Often they may be so difficult to overcome, that they remain a thorn in our side for a lifetime. In many ways it can be very dehumanizing. This is the very groundwork of prejudices and racism; we all should know the results of that. To make any kind of generalization whether it be towards an institution, race, religion, or nationality is only to deny what may actually be the truth, but we all do it to one degree or another. For instance, if I would ask you to give your immediate response to the word politician you just may generalize by saying they are corrupt or hypocritical. In truth not every politician would fit that generalization. Then again if I would say Pharisee you may respond by saying enemy of Jesus. Although when we examine carefully that was not the case for all Pharisees.

Although the gospels in general lead one to believe that all Pharisees were hostile and out to get rid of Jesus, this morning's gospel lesson clearly indicates otherwise. We read that some Pharisees came to warn Jesus of his pending fate at the hands of Herod, king of Galilee. "And that very hour some Pharisees came and said to Jesus, 'Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.'" With this warning from these particular Pharisees Jesus didn't have His usual response of some kind of rebuke but listen to them and accepted what they had told Him as a truth. It was almost as if they must have known each other. In fact His response was to ask them to jeopardize themselves by returning to Herod with this inflammatory message, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work.'"

In no uncertain terms no one was going to dictate to Jesus how He was to live His life. His life was only to be determined by God. Jesus response was just not a polite response to a king. It was cutting and extremely demeaning. To be called a fox was to be called sly and cunning, and one who was a killer as was the fox. But even more demeaning was that the fox to the Jew was symbolic of being worthless and insignificant. Of course to deliver such a message would have endangered these well intentioned Pharisees. One would speculate that they never followed through with that message.

On the other hand they must have also heard the ending of this message which truly was a forecast of things to come. "Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem." This was a clear indication that while He was in the territory outside of Jerusalem He was safe but once in Jerusalem His fate would be realized. Therefore, No one was going to alter God's plans. No one not even the powerful and ruthless King who would have been even more enraged and determined to take Jesus' life if he had heard the message given to those Pharisees who didn't fit the generalizations given to the Pharisees as a whole. It is almost a certainty that the message never reached Herod's ears. To label these Pharisees with the rest who we see in the gospels is to deny the truth and bring disrespect to their lives.

But the story does not end with the friendly Pharisees. Jesus future predictions suddenly turn away from Herod and what could be called the powerful force of the day. His fate rested within the center of Jewish life and religion, the city of Jerusalem. He proclaimed, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See your house is left to you."

In this Jesus was saying that although his desire was for the Jews to receive the good news of his message and be protected by its eternal promise, they chose not to listen. The seat of Jewish life and religion rejected his overtures to bring His saving message to them. But that would soon change for He foretold the time that they would falsely and momentarily change their minds. "And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" This of course would happen after so many witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the dead. It was then that they would become excited over the fact that Jesus was the long awaited political Messiah to lead them into their new earthly kingdom. They would welcome Him into Jerusalem to be anointed this new king, the messiah. Of course He was given the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday but this was only because the people misunderstood Him.

Frankly this story tells us how little we know about Jesus life. First he must have had followers within the deep tradition of the Jewish heritage which is evidenced by those Pharisees who warned Him. For instance, there are a couple of instances which could be determine of having some Pharisees following Him. There is also the fact that He speaks about Jerusalem rejecting Him which pointed to other times which He spent in Jerusalem not recorded by three of the Gospels. The Gospel of John seems to have had Him in Jerusalem other times but were sketchy as to the results. One must think He was in Jerusalem more than recorded since he had close friends who live in Bethany right outside of Jerusalem.

One must speculated from our Gospel that if He had been in Jerusalem other times that His experiences were not the best and perhaps was rejected. Except for His run-ins with the Jewish authorities and His rejection in his hometown, the major accounts of Jesus life among the people is that He was very popular. That could very well be a generalization which was untrue. This comes out in His words about Jerusalem. You could almost feel the hurt in His Words. He wished so deeply that they would receive His love and His message of the good news but it is quite evident He was rejected as just another false prophet.

Knowing the heartbreak which he must have experience throughout His ministry, makes His message of love only become more amazing. God's love goes well beyond any hurtful generalizations or even demoralizing rejections. It is almost incomprehensible to the human mind. To endure the suffering and rejection of the cross, it is almost unbelievable to hear the words. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Throughout my writing of this message I kept thinking about the horrible situation in Ukraine. During the first days of that war the Ukrainians must have and maybe still do feel the pain and

hurt of being rejected or at best being left alone by the world to fight the battle to save their homeland and their lives. You could feel the pain in their voices and see the pain upon their faces. But the world felt their pain and quickly began to respond. Time will tell what the eventual outcome will be but the resolve of the Ukrainian people is beyond amazing. On the other hand I saw people in Russia protesting the war and being arrested. According to the last report thousands have been arrested by a ruthless dictator. Tragically though we may make the generalization that Russia is evil which would include those who have been trying to protest against the war. They must feel the pain of being falsely included as a part of their dictator's evil acts.

To say the least people are dying and suffering needlessly and out of the love which God has shown us we must make the sacrifices necessary in order to bring peace to our troubled times and not be caught in making excuses and false generalizations which only will perpetuate the pain and suffering which is being experienced. In light of this we will bring forth our Angel Tree in order to help those who are in such desperate need. For each contribution over the next several weeks during lent an angel will be placed on the tree. The donations will go towards the ELCA appeal which will be distributed to the Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran World Federation who are already on the ground with their assistance. Our Love and sacrifice can and will make a difference. We pray that God's amazing grace as shown to us through Jesus will continue to be displayed through the unity of the world's nations in order to bring peace and justice.

Anthem: ["Amazing Grace" The 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

Ever loving God and Father to us all, we continually reject you by denying acts of love in face of hatred, bitterness, and war. Because of this our lives are full of hurt and pain. We reach out to be touched by your hand of forgiveness. Give us the will and the wisdom to make the sacrifices which will bring peace to this troubled time. Continue to give the nations and people of the world the unity in order to become victorious over the evil actions of those who lack concern for your children.

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, Nancy Griebel, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, David Kieffer, Pam Lambert, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, the McNamara family, 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, and 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: ["Jesus, Still Lead On"](#)

Announcements

Lenten Soup and Bread Services
– Thursday, March 17, 6:00 PM
– **Wednesday**, March 23, 6:00 PM

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/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291