

## Easter #6

5-17-2020

J.V.Trautwein

### Celebrate (Introduction)

“Jesus does not abandon his followers. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus comes to abide with his disciples of every generation. As Pentecost draws near, we are reminded that the risen Christ dwells in us as the Spirit of truth. We receive this Spirit in baptism and pray that in our gathering around the Lord’s table the Spirit will transform us to be the body of the risen Christ in the world.”

### Opening Hymn: [“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”](#)

#### Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, O peoples,

let the sound of his praise be heard,

<sup>9</sup> who has kept us among the living,  
and has not let our feet slip.

<sup>10</sup> For you, O God, have tested us;  
you have tried us as silver is tried.

<sup>11</sup> You brought us into the net;  
you laid burdens on our backs;

<sup>12</sup> you let people ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and through water;

yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>13</sup> I will come into your house with burnt offerings;  
I will pay you my vows,

<sup>14</sup> those that my lips uttered  
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

<sup>15</sup> I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings,  
with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams;

I will make an offering of bulls and goats. *Selah*

<sup>16</sup> Come and hear, all you who fear God,  
and I will tell what he has done for me.

<sup>17</sup> I cried aloud to him,  
and he was extolled with my tongue.

<sup>18</sup> If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,  
the Lord would not have listened.

<sup>19</sup> But truly God has listened;  
he has given heed to the words of my prayer.

<sup>20</sup> Blessed be God,  
because he has not rejected my prayer  
or removed his steadfast love from me.

**Hymn of Praise:** [“Rejoice The Lord is King”](#)

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and everlasting God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy received the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** [Acts: 17:22-31](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [1 Peter 3:13-22](#)

**The Gospel:** [John 14:15-21](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** [“Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart”](#)

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

As a member of the senior generation, I have the privilege to look back upon the many experiences of life which I have had. Hopefully these experiences have had a positive influence upon who I am now. In most instances the greatest positive contributions seemed to be at the time of the worst negative experiences I had to confront and live through. The road I traveled presented everything from relationship breakups, to economic hardships, to near death health issues, and to a devastating disaster destroying much of my personal belongings and treasures. This is just to mention a few.

But, it was not only the challenges presented by what could be called negative events that contributed to who I am today. It was also the challenges of normal activities which have had their lasting imprints upon my life such as education, jobs, leisure time and social activities, personal projects and relationships. Whether these life experiences have had a positives or negative influence upon my life has depended upon the sacrifices I made or did not make to overcome or meet the challenge they presented. The most powerful positive influences occurred when I made the most sacrifice and effort in order to have a positive conclusion.

Success in whatever we do almost always demands sacrifice of some kind. In so much of life it is how much we are willing to sacrifice which determines the end results and which determines who we are. This is so true especially in times of personal and societal crisis. At these times we may ask ourselves is the crisis worth our sacrifice of our normal life’s activities? Often if we see no overall benefit for us, maybe even hurting us economically or socially, we may just answer it’s not worth it. But, if we see the crisis ultimately affecting our personal being and the physical suffering and death of others, we just may say it is well worth any sacrifice.

There is a post on Facebook which dramatically speaks to this. It shows a man being interviewed. The interviewer began, “You prefer to save the economy knowing that many will die from it. How many dead do you consider acceptable to save the economy?” The man paused and then answered “Hmmm...Acceptable? Maybe between 70 and...probably 700.” The

interviewer responded, “70, is that okay? Let me show you 70 people.” With that there appeared a collection of 70 people. The man turned and looked startled. “It’s my family.” The interviewer then asked a startled man, “And now what do you think would be an acceptable number?” The man answered teary eyed, “Zero.” Then a little boy ran from the crowd shouting “Daddy.”

The point of me including this emotional post is not to diminish the fact that we as a nation have a difficult dilemma between people suffering great economic hardship and people suffering and dying from this pandemic. This is an extremely difficult time for many. But I am using this post to dramatically illustrate the true nature of sacrifice and the dilemma which so often coincides with it. Sacrifice in so many cases can have extreme consequences which define who we are by how we respond.

Peter in his first letter helps us to understand sacrifice and our response to it. He writes to those who were facing and enduring sacrifice. “Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed.” Sacrifices we make may be ridiculed as being self-serving. But, with sacrifices made out of love for others there is no grounds for ridicule. Peter writes, “Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord.” To sanctify Christ is to live the life He lived, the life of sacrificial love. This sacrificial love is that of helping others that they may be able to live their lives without want, pain, and suffering. It is to go beyond ourselves. Such a sacrifice may cause the giver to suffer but in their suffering they are fulfilled in knowing that they perhaps are giving life to another human being. Peter writes, “For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.” The example we have is always present with us – the example of love and hope given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Of course the outcome of sacrificial love depends on perseverance. We not only have Jesus life to motivate us to fulfill sacrificial love but it is in knowing that God’s presence is there by our side every step of the way. We are not left alone. To know this keeps our pursuit alive until our sacrifice is fulfilled. We are assured of this by John in his gospel, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.” He reassures us with this promise, “I will not leave you orphaned.”

Crisis in life will happen and we will be confronted with the decisions which may drastically affect our lives or the life of others. We not only need the understanding and wisdom but love in order to make the sacrifice needed towards an ultimate positive solution and outcome. But through it all we know that God’s presence is always with us. We are assured that we will not make the needed sacrifice alone. We are not orphaned but are loved children of God. This will lead us to realize that in the end we will not look upon our decision as a sacrifice but as a gift of love.

**The Anthem:** [“Be Thou My Vision”](#) Nathan Pacheco

### **The Offering\***

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**

Our most loving God, we come to you still facing the crisis of a deadly virus. Give us the wisdom and understanding in order to make the decisions confronting us as individuals and as a society. We know that you have given us the example of sacrificial love through your Son, Jesus. Let this example come alive within us during this time of turmoil and anxiety. We continue to pray for those who are suffering the pain and hardship during this crisis. Guide us in the ways in which we may be your loving and caring servants so others may live. Continue to be by our side in the sacrificial love which we extend.

We also pray for all the young people who are graduating from high school and college. Many of these young people are missing the joy and eventual memories of the normal activities associated with graduation. May we reach out to them in love to help them during this important time in their lives.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence, especially Pam Ash, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, Billy Jean Eddy & family, the Elshafei family, Betty Fultz, Darrell Garrison, the John Family, Robert Karner, Ray Lambert, Donna Mayhew, Bev and Jim Mertz, Nic Nelson, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Terre Rones, Paul Sagal, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Tommy Shimer, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family, Linda Stephens, Randy Stephens, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Pastor Jack, and all those who are suffering pain, and sorrow as a result of this pandemic.

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 come through the power of His presence within you.  
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

## **Closing Hymn: ["Lift High the Cross"](#)**

\*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

Website: <http://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>