

Pentecost #16

9-12-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

Celebrate (Introduction)

“Three weeks ago we heard Peter’s confession of faith as told in John’s gospel. This week we hear Mark’s version, when Peter says, “You are the Messiah.” In John, the stumbling block is Jesus’ invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus’ words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus’ words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of messiah) in Mark only on the way to the cross so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.”

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

Opening Hymn: [“Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty”](#)

Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

“I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my supplications.

² Because he inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on him as long as I live.

³ The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me;
I suffered distress and anguish.

⁴ Then I called on the name of the Lord:
“O Lord, I pray, save my life!”

⁵ Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
our God is merciful.

⁶ The Lord protects the simple;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

⁷ Return, O my soul, to your rest,
for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.

⁸ For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling.

⁹ I walk before the Lord
in the land of the living.”

Hymn of Praise: [“Praise and Thanksgiving Be to God”](#)

Prayer of the Day

“O God, through suffering and rejection you bring forth our salvation, and by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.”

1st Reading: [Isaiah 50:4-9a](#)

2nd Reading: [James 3:1-12](#)

The Gospel: [Mark 8:27-38](#)

Hymn of the Day: [“Children of the Heavenly Father”](#)

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

As one becomes older a noticeable sign of aging is that no matter how much exercise, the muscles begin to show signs of weakening and even deterioration. Therefore mobility can become affected and muscle strength declines. They say that stability is directly related to this decline in muscle strength. Of course the central muscle which determines life, the heart, also becomes a victim of this decline. All muscles seem to decline as age overtakes us.

The exception to this is the most powerful or strongest muscle contained within the human body – the tongue. Of course physically the tongue is extremely vital for without it eating becomes virtually impossible. But it is also vital because it is a necessary muscle involved in speaking. Therefore it is useful in our communication and relationships with others. This small muscle is so powerful it can be extremely destructive and hurtful to not only oneself but to others by what it relays through speech. It is the instrument which relays the direction of our mindset. James in his epistle relates it as the small rudder of a ship. Although being very small it controls the ship’s direction. James writes, “Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.” Therefore the power of the tongue can be utilized to promote or project good but also has the ability to spew evil as illustrated by James. “How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire.

The power of the tongue not only projects who we are but how it affects others. The power of the tongue becomes extremely important for those who teach, those who lead, and those who have positions of influence. They have the extreme responsibility to project the truth as well as that which promotes the well-being of their audience. When they project hurtful and destructive thoughts it is very clear what can happen. History, as well as current events, are proof of the hurtful, destructive, and even deadly consequences. But we need not look beyond ourselves we too have the capacity to show forth both sides of the tongue as James indicates, “From the same mouth come blessing and cursing.”

If we turn to the life of Jesus we clearly see evidence of how the tongue can be damaging while on the other hand very constructive and even life-giving. Throughout His ministry Jesus was the recipient of tongues of fire from those in authority. The Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and even Priests were attacking Him with false claims which eventually lead the people to believe the charge of blasphemy leading to the cross. Truth be known Jesus also had very little good to say about the hypocrisy of those in authority. But Jesus' words were grounded in truth whereas the authorities made up accusations which suited their own purposes. We haven't progress very much for such made-up accusations and lies still very much persists today causing suffering and even death.

On the other hand, Jesus with His tongue healed people and also received positive reactions of the tongue from others. This is somewhat the situation when after many months in closely following Jesus the disciples found themselves with Him in the region of Caesarea Philippi which was Gentile territory and the center of many pagan gods. In these surroundings Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do the people say that I am?" The answer which came back was "John the Baptist, and others Elijah, and still others, one of the prophets." These were far from the ill tongued words of the authorities. Then he got more personal "But who do you say that I am?" Being impulsive and outspoken Peter blurted out, "You are the Messiah." This was the ultimate answer of a tongue of praise.

But, upon hearing this Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone. Such big news, why in the world would He tell them that? If He was the Messiah He would want the support of everybody. Could it have been that He knew that they really misunderstood the true meaning of the Messiah and thus who He really was? Peter, a Jew, knew the traditional meaning of the Messiah which had a long history. It was a history which began centuries prior to Jesus. It was a history which saw the Messiah as God's anointed political king who would lead the Jews to their new kingdom.

With such a concept of the Messiah, it was easy to see how the disciples and Peter came to misunderstand who this Jesus was. After all, they had seen one miracle after another which could only have come through the power of God. Time and time again they witnessed Jesus' actions which defied human reason and human capabilities. He had even given them the power to heal. His powers and authority over the human and natural conditions were beyond the powers of any human. Only a super human, operating out of the power and authority of God could have done the things which Jesus did. He was the closest example they could have imagined to be the Messiah. They thought that it would only be a matter of time before this Jesus would exercise His ultimate power and the Kingdom of Israel reestablished.

Jesus knew He was being misunderstood and He knew He had to have more time in redefining the Messiah and His mission. Make no mistake, the misconception coming from the tongue of Peter was real and quickly became evident. Jesus therefore immediately began to teach them about the truth of who He was. "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the Scribes, and be killed and after three day rise again." Woe, wait a minute, this is not the Messiah we have longed for. He certainly isn't talking about Himself. Maybe He is confused; maybe He is playing a game with us. He has to stop this silly talk

– it’s bad P.R. Therefore, impulsive Peter pulled Jesus aside to let the other side of his tongue come forth in rebuking Jesus. What in the world are you doing? Are you in your right mind? That’s not the Messiah you’re talking about. Stop this ridiculous talk for you are the Messiah.

In return Jesus rebuked Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” Don’t try to tempt me to be what I am not. You have totally misunderstood who I am and now you want me to live up to your misunderstandings. I will not do that. You are the one who must open your mind as to who I really am. You must open your mind as to how God defines the Messiah. You must understand God’s kingdom is a spiritual kingdom which permeates all of life and goes well beyond earthly kingdoms. This is why I don’t want you going around spreading your misunderstandings until you really understand who I am. You must know the truth before unleashing your tongue.

Jesus then gathered His disciples and those who were following Him and began to teach them what it meant to be a follower of this new concept of the Messiah. Such a follower must not see life just in terms of earthly glory, riches and power. They are to rather see life in terms of denial and de-emphasis of all these earthly goals in order to gain the real importance of life – the Gospel of love. “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it.”

Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ, is not to be misunderstood. His kingdom is not found in religiosities and social traditions and mores but in living life itself in God’s message of love and forgiveness. His kingdom is the way of life. It even isn’t man’s earthly institutions like the church. The church, its doctrines, teachings and rituals are not in and of themselves Christianity, but are pathways to lead us to walk in God’s way through Jesus life and message. His kingdom is not to be falsely misrepresented by loose tongues proclaiming self-indulging ideologies.

Our tongues need always seek to proclaim this kingdom of love. This is what we have been called to do through our baptism as experienced by Owen this morning. In his baptism we all have the responsibility to see that he hears and sees this love through us. He needs us to help guide him away from misunderstandings to the truth as found in the Gospel and as revealed to him through God’s ever presence. We must display the tongue of truth and love and not that of fire and misunderstandings. He is a child of God and needs to know what that means as he journeys through life/ This journey for him has just begun and for us it continues. Each of us needs to share and received the witness of love through how we control the power of our tongues.

Anthem: [“Wade in the Water” The Academy 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

Our eternal Father, this weekend we remember 20 years ago when nearly 3,000 people died as a result of the terrorists' attack of 9/11. It is with extreme thanksgiving and reverence that we remember those who gave their lives in helping others during those tragic moments. With this remembrance may we rededicate our lives to give of ourselves to those who are in distress. Let us see that often we must sacrifice for the well-being of others. This is especially true during this time of living through the deadly pandemic of Covid-19.

Today we especially pray for Owen Hudgins who was received as your child through Baptism. Grant both Joey and Kristin the wisdom and continual love to care for both Owen and Joey. Fill their lives with joy and celebration.

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: ["Lift High the Cross"](#)

Announcements

Today is the baptism of Owen Hudgins the second son of Joey and Kristin Hudgins.

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