

Devotions – August 9-15, 2020
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Sunday, August 9, 2020

Text: Genesis 9:11-17

¹¹"I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹²God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." ¹⁷God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."

In our world today a rainbow can represent many things within culture, lore, and faith: whether it is to represent the LGBTQ+ community or thinking that you can find a pot of gold at the end of one. Though, for the Judaeo-Christian faith, the rainbow is one of the oldest covenantal signs between God and all of creation. Such a covenant was made with Noah after the flood and represents God's promise to not act as God had done within the flood story. However, such a covenant, I feel, represents an overall compassion and love which God gives to creation. I say this because it is out of reflective love and compassion that God makes this covenant and then gives the rainbow as a sign and reminder to both God and creation. So, the next time you see a rainbow let it be a reminder of the love and compassion which God has for us all.

Let us pray: *Oh Lord, we give you thanks for the many signs and wonders, especially the rainbow, which show us how much you love and care for us. We ask that you continue the wonderful work of caring you do for all of creation. Amen.*



Monday, August 10, 2020

Text: Psalm 67

¹"May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, ²that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations. ³Let the peoples praise you,

O God; let all the peoples praise you. ⁴Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. ⁵Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. ⁶The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. ⁷May God continue to bless us; let all the ends of the earth revere him.”

With all that is going on in our world these days, to experience any sense of praise or blessing might be few and far between. Yet what this Psalm reminds us is the active nature of God that helps and saves all nations. For God’s strength and power is beyond anything that our world might throw at us. Furthermore, the blessings of God can come in many shapes and forms, whether it be a beautiful flower that blooms in our gardens or the help and support of others. Yes, our days may not be the greatest, but at the same time the Psalm reminds us of God’s great works and blessings that have and will come for us all. Now despite what our world brings to us, our blessings past and future will always be something worthy of giving great praise.

Let us pray: *Dear God, we give you thanks for the many blessings in our lives and we ask that you continue to be with us providing all types of blessings especially during our darker times. Amen.*



Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Text: Joel 2:28-29

²⁸“Then afterward I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my spirit.”

The description of God pouring out his spirit, in the book of Joel, sounds like one heck of a party. People speaking in prophetic voices, having dreams and experiencing visions. One might wonder what type of drug or drink could produce such a crazy experience. Yet such a passage is not a crazy party with people using alcohol or drugs to have such an experience. The experience comes with God pouring out his spirit unto all peoples. God’s spirit is greater than anything we could imagine and has the capability of doing many wonderful things. May we look forward to the day where none of us need anything but the Spirit of God to sustain and lift us up to experience such joy as the author of Joel describes.

Let us pray: *Oh Lord, pour out your Spirit on all of the people so that we can live in the harmony and joy that comes with such an embodied experience. Amen.*



Wednesday, August 12, 2020

Text: Matthew 5:14-16

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Here in the Upper Peninsula there are plenty of lighthouses that line the shores of the Great Lakes. Of course, the job of a lighthouse is to give light as warning for impending danger and provide guidance to ships in the middle of the night. Such light for many a sailor in the past had been a welcoming if not joyous sight to see as they made their journey on the sea. In the Gospel text, Jesus tells his disciples that they are the light of the world and that their light should shine before others. Such a light, I feel, is to be one that not only shows our good works but also gives hope and guidance to whomever may see it. In a way we, too, as disciples of Christ should be like the lighthouses that line the Great Lakes shores. The reason for this is the light of Christ should shine from us and be a welcoming guiding sight for all to see.

Let us pray: *Oh Lord, let your light shine within us and be a welcoming beacon for all who may see it. Amen.*



Thursday, August 13, 2020

Text: John 18:33-38

³³"Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" ³⁴Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" ³⁵Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" ³⁶Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." ³⁷Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." ³⁸Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."

"What is truth?" is probably a common phrase asked as we sift through all the scientific and political information that seems to be thrown at us in our world. However, the irony about Pilate asking Jesus, "What is truth?" in the last verse is that the truth is staring him in the face. In John's Gospel, Jesus is the truth standing before Pilate in this narrative. However, it seems

Pilate then cannot understand, let alone get past his own self, to actually recognize anything, let alone truth. This then leads to the execution of Jesus. Yet it is in the truth that John reminds us not only reveals God but sets us free. For in the end, the truth of Jesus not only reveals to us God but also sets us free from ourselves, which can actually be far more rewarding than we think.

Let us pray: *Almighty God, we give thanks for revealing to us the truth of you in Jesus Christ and setting us free from ourselves. Let us always experience the impact and benefit of your truth in our world. Amen.*



Friday, August 14, 2020

Text: Acts 8:35-39

³⁵“Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.”

As a pastor, it is one of my greatest privileges to administer the sacrament of Holy Baptism. Whether the baptism is for a newborn infant or an adult, it is a joy to bring someone such a great gift from God. This gift of baptism is free for all and should be given to all that seek it. This part of Acts reminds us that baptism is a free gift to an individual that fits no sense of normalcy. However, the Ethiopian Eunuch still desires and even inquires, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” Such a question is not met with an answer but with the act of baptizing. The reality then becomes there is nothing that should prevent us from being baptized and we should all rejoice when such a free gift is given anyone.

Let us pray: *Oh Lord, we give you thanks for the gift of baptism and we rejoice in all who are able to receive such a free gift. Amen.*



Saturday, August 15, 2020

Text: James 3:17-18

¹⁷“But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.”

Many of us highly seek a wisdom that will be helpful for our self and others. We look for those who have a great wisdom to help lead and support us in our lives. Though good wisdom does come with age and experience, as James points out the greatest wisdom comes from above. A wisdom that is pure, peaceable, gentle, yielding, merciful, productive, and fair which are all great qualities. Though I feel there are not a whole lot of people that are able to have such qualities. Which is why, with those who do possess such qualities, we should listen and learn from them. For ultimately great wisdom is something that can be beneficial for us all in order to live a good and healthy life.

Let us pray: *Almighty Creator, we give you thanks for bestowing great wisdom from above and we ask that you aid us in not only seeking but hearing such wisdom in our world. Amen.*

