

Sunday, February 4, 2018
5th Sunday after the Epiphany

INTRODUCTION

In Isaiah it is the one God who sits above the earth and numbers the stars—it is that God who strengthens the powerless. So in Jesus' healing work we see the hand of the creator God, lifting up the sick woman to health and service (*diakonia*). Like Simon's mother-in-law, we are lifted up to health and diakonia. Following Jesus, we strengthen the powerless; like Jesus, we seek to renew our own strength in quiet times of prayer.

PRELUDE

"Antiphon"

J.S. Bach

***GATHERING SONG**

"Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above"

**Sing praise to God who reigns above,
the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love,
the God of our salvation.
With healing balm my soul is filled
and every faithless murmur stilled:
To God all praise and glory.**

**The Lord is never far away,
but through all grief distressing,
an ever present help and stay,
our peace and joy and blessing.
As with a mother's tender hand,
God gently leads the chosen band:
To God all praise and glory.**

**Thus all my toilsome way along,
I sing aloud thy praises,
that earth may hear the grateful song
my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart,
both soul and body bear your part:
To God all praise and glory.**

**Let all who name Christ's holy name
give God all praise and glory;
let all who own his power proclaim
aloud the wondrous story!
Cast each false idol from its throne,**

for Christ is Lord, and Christ alone:
To God all praise and glory.

***GREETING**

☐ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

☑ **And also with you.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

“Kyrie Eleison”

pg. 184

**Kyrie eleison,
on our world and on our way,
Kyrie eleison, ev’ry day.
For peace in the world,
for the health of the church,
for the unity of all;
for this holy house,
for all who worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord**

**Kyrie eleison,
on our world and on our way,
Kyrie eleison, ev’ry day.
That we may live out
your impassioned response
to the hungry and the poor;
that we may live out
truth and justice and grace,
let us pray to the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord**

**Kyrie eleison,
on our world and on our way,
Kyrie eleison, ev’ry day.
For peace in our hearts,
for peace in our homes,
for friends and family;
for life and for love,
for our work and our play,
let us pray to the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord**

**Kyrie eleison,
on our world and on our way,
Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.
For your Spirit to guide;
that you center our lives
in the water and the Word;
that you nourish our souls
with your body and blood,
let us pray to the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord**

**Kyrie eleison,
on our world and on our way,
Kyrie eleison, ev'ry day.**

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *Everlasting God,*

G **you give strength to the weak and power to the faint. Make us agents of your healing and wholeness, that your good news may be made known to the ends of your creation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

ANTHEM

"On Eagles' Wings"
Chancel Choir

Rev. Michael Joncas

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:21-31

The Judeans in exile have a good reason to be hopeful: the one who will bring them to freedom is the God who created the world, the God who subdues the rulers of the earth and gives strength to those who are weary.

- ²¹Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
- ²²It is he who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
- ²³who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
- ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.
- ²⁵To whom then will you compare me,

or who is my equal? says the Holy One.
²⁶Lift up your eyes on high and see:
 Who created these?
 He who brings out their host and numbers them,
 calling them all by name;
 because he is great in strength,
 mighty in power,
 not one is missing.
²⁷Why do you say, O Jacob,
 and speak, O Israel,
 “My way is hidden from the LORD,
 and my right is disregarded by my God”?
²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard?
 The LORD is the everlasting God,
 the Creator of the ends of the earth.
 He does not faint or grow weary;
 his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹He gives power to the faint,
 and strengthens the powerless.
³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary,
 and the young will fall exhausted;
³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
 they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
 they shall run and not be weary,
 they shall walk and not faint.

Reflection

The prophet is writing to people who have been through a lot—exile, their city and temple destroyed, their parents and children killed. Their not unreasonable question is, where is God? Does God have any power at all? If so, why have we suffered so? This text is the answer to those questions. Who is God? (verses 21-24) How is God’s power described? What other power or god can our God, the Holy One, be compared to? (verses 25-26) In verses 27 and following, the prophet addresses the questions of God’s people directly. (verse 27) Who is God? (verse 28) What are God’s powers? (verses 28-29) Because God is our God, what do we know about our power to endure and be faithful? (verses 29-31) Where do we get the power to persist in faith? How have you experienced God’s strength giving you strength?

Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

¹Hallelujah! How good it is to sing praises | to our God!
 How pleasant it is to honor | God with praise!
²**The LORD re- | builds Jerusalem,**
and gathers the ex- | iles of Israel.

³The LORD heals the | brokenhearted
and binds | up their wounds.

⁴**The LORD counts the number | of the stars
and calls them all | by their names.**

⁵Great is our LORD and might- | y in power;
there is no limit | to God's wisdom.

⁶**The LORD lifts | up the lowly,
but casts the wicked | to the ground.**

⁷Sing to the LORD| with thanksgiving;
make music upon the harp | to our God,

⁸**who covers the heav- | ens with clouds
and prepares rain for the earth, making grass to grow up- | on the mountains.**

⁹God provides food | for the cattle
and for the young ravens | when they cry.

¹⁰**God is not impressed by the might | of a horse,
and has no pleasure in the speed | of a runner,**

¹¹but finds pleasure in those who | fear the LORD,
in those who await God's steadfast love. ^{20c}| Hallelujah!

Reflection

Why should we praise God? (verses 1-6) How does God work to build up? How should we praise God? (verse 7) When do you sing to the Lord with thanksgiving? (I'm not going to ask you about playing the lyre—but my grandson gives thanks to God on the guitar!) In verses 8-9 the psalmist gives more reasons to praise God. What are they? What gives God pleasure? (verses 10-11) Have you ever considered that your praise and prayer would bring pleasure to God? How does that idea affect you? How does this psalm help to build up your faith?

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

God entrusted Paul with the responsibility of bringing the gospel to diverse people. Hence the focus of Paul's ministry is not his own rights or privileges as an apostle but the privilege of serving God by freely sharing the good news of Christ with others.

¹⁶If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! ¹⁷For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. ¹⁸What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

¹⁹For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. ²⁰To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. ²¹To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. ²²To the

weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. ²³I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

Reflection

In this text, Paul is discussing why he is an apostle. (Note: the word “apostle” comes from the Greek word for “one sent with a commission”) Is he a volunteer? (verses 16-17) What is his reward for doing what he has been given a commission to do? (verse 18) In what way is Paul free? (verse 19—note that as a Roman citizen, Paul could not legally be enslaved. But that is not what he is talking about.) What has Paul done with his freedom? (verse 19b) How has he used his “volunteer slavery”? (verses 20-23) What do you think he means when he says he becomes “as one” with the people to whom he is speaking? There is an example of this in Acts 17:16-34. Why does he do this? (verse 23) Have you ever tried to follow Paul’s example? How did that go?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia. Alleluia.
Alleluia, alleluia.**

***GOSPEL**

Mark 1:29-39

Everywhere Jesus goes, many people expect him to set them free from oppression. Everywhere he goes, he heals them and sets them free. Disease, devils, and death are running for their lives. The forces that diminish human life are rendered powerless by Jesus.

²⁹As soon as [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³²That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. ³³And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷When they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is searching for you.” ³⁸He answered, “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.” ³⁹And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Reflection

In this text, what is Jesus doing to live out the proclamation that the kingdom of God has come near? (see Mark 1:14-15 for the proclamation; verses 30-31, 32-34, 38-39) How does Jesus have strength for this work? (verse 35) One of the questions that this text raises for me is, why are some people healed and some not? Have you ever prayed for healing, and have not received it? I think of people in our congregation, for whom we faithfully prayed, and they did not get better but died. Is it because God has a better plan? It's hard for me to believe that God's plan for their death is better than God's keeping them with us, where we got to experience their presence and love! Does God not care? It can't be because we don't have faith, because I know of the faith of people in this congregation who join in prayers daily. Is God not powerful enough to heal some people? How do we live with these questions, as we have faith that the kingdom of God is indeed coming near? What do you think?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

Rev. Jim Pierce

HYMN OF THE DAY

"We Are The Church"

Refrain

**We are the church,
the body of our Lord;
we are all God's children.
We have been restored.**

**The church is not a building
where people go to pray;
it's not made out of sticks and stones,
it's not made out of clay. *Refrain***

**You can go to worship
but you cannot go to church;
you can't find a building that's alive
no matter how you search. *Refrain***

**The church is not a business,
a committee or a board;
it's not a corporation for
the business of the Lord. *Refrain***

**The church, it is the people
living out their lives,
called, enlightened, sanctified
for the work of Jesus Christ. *Refrain***

***APOSTLES' CREED**

☒ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!

***PRAYER SONG**

"Turn Your Eyes upon Jesus"

Turn you eyes upon Jesus,
look full in His wonderful face;
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim
in the light of His glory and grace.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Confident that God our light and our salvation hears us when we pray, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

A brief silence.

For the church, its pastors, deacons, musicians, artists, teachers, seminarians, and all proclaimers of the gospel, that your gift of steadfast love and mercy will spread throughout the world, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the earth and all living creatures, for those preparing fields for planting, and for favorable weather, that all of us who care for this life will find voice to help creation thrive, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For all rulers of the earth in local, regional, national, and international offices, and those without the power of official office, that they will be given the courage to work for the protection of all people and act as servants of all, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For all who suffer this day: the sick and wounded, the grieving and brokenhearted, the hungry and exploited, those with malaria, and all who need our prayers *especially Jim, Roxanna, Mary Anna, Kay, and Linda* and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*), that they will be consoled and healed by health care workers, counselors, family, and friends, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For those who gather in fellowship and festivities, for the ministries of this congregation in our community and throughout the world, that in all our service we see ourselves centered around Christ, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

In thanksgiving for those who have died in the faith and now sing praises around the throne of God, and that we be assured of the promise of everlasting life, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Merciful God, you hear our prayers even before we speak them. Receive them for the sake of the one through whom you have revealed your goodness, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

“Christ Be Our Light”

ELW 715

**Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.**

Refrain

**Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.**

**Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain***

**Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,**

shared until all are fed. *Refrain*

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain*

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C receive the gifts we bring, our selves, our time, and our possessions. Through this meal unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*

C **And also with you.**

P *Lift up your hearts.*

C **We lift them to the Lord.**

P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*

C **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. By the leading of a star he was shown forth to all nations; in the waters of the Jordan you proclaimed him your beloved Son; and in the miracle of water turned to wine he revealed your glory. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of pow'r and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory, full of your glory.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.
In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:*

C **Christ has died.**

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P *With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.*

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P *Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.*

C **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P *All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.*

C **Amen!**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.*

C **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen!**

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *We who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. Come. Be filled with light and life.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

C **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *O Morning Star, fair and bright,*

C **you have refreshed us again with heavenly food. You are our dearest treasure. Go with us now—today, tomorrow, every day—that we tell the story of your never-ending love and sing your praise both now and forever. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *The God of glory dwell in you richly,
name you beloved,
and shine brightly on your path;
and the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.*

C **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG “Shout to the North”**

**Men of faith rise up and sing
Of the great and glorious King
You are strong when you feel weak
In your brokenness complete**

Refrain

**Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth**

**Rise up women of the truth
Stand and sing to broken hearts
Who can know the healing pow'r
Of our awesome King of love *Refrain***

**Rise up church with broken wings
Fill this place with songs again
Of our God who reigns on high
By His grace again we'll fly *Refrain***

**We've been through fire
We've been through rain
We've been refined
By the pow'r of His name
We've fallen deeper
In love with You
You've burned
The truth on our lips**

**Shout to the north and the south
Sing to the east and the west
Jesus is Savior to all
Lord of heaven and earth
Lord of heaven and earth
Lord of heaven and earth
Lord of heaven and earth**