

Sunday, July 8, 2018
7th Sunday after Pentecost

***GATHERING SONG**

"Spirit of Gentleness"

ELW 396

Refrain

Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow through the wilderness calling and free;
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.

You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing:
"Awake from your slumbers and rise on your wings."

You swept through the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with idols and lies,
then you spoke through your prophets to open their eyes. *Refrain*

You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes.
From the bondage of sorrow all the captives dream dreams;
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes.
With bold new decisions your people arise. *Refrain*

***GREETING**

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

G And also with you.

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

"Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ"

ELW 674

Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.

Refrain

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,
pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again,

pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he sets the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express. *Refrain*

Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God (Immanuel) ev'rywhere! *Refrain*

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

☞ *God of the covenant,*

☞ **in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 2:1-5

In 597 bce, the priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.

¹[A voice] said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.²And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. ³He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD." ⁵Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

Reflection

This text is God's call to Ezekiel to be a prophet. Notice that not only did the Lord speak to him, but also set him on his feet so that he could hear God's call to him. (verses 1-2) Like many other call stories in the Bible, this seems to indicate that Ezekiel wasn't exactly thrilled to be called to be a prophet. To whom is Ezekiel called to prophesy? (verse 3) As you read what the Lord said to Ezekiel, what do you think of his chances of success in making them listen? (verses 3-4) What does God expect from what Ezekiel is sent to do? (verse 5, and also verses 6-7) This text describes what God expects of the prophet. We have a prophet among us, who has been called to speak God's word to us weekly (or more often). If we take this text seriously, who should we look at first if we don't understand the message or "get it"? (Remember that I say that as someone who rarely preaches, but always needs to hear!)

Psalm 123

¹To you I lift | up my eyes,
to you enthroned | in the heavens.

²As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maid to the hand | of her mistress,

so our eyes look to you, O LORD our God, until you show | us your mercy.

³Have mercy upon us, O | LORD, have mercy,
for we have had more than enough | of contempt,

**⁴too much of the scorn of the in- | dolent rich,
and of the derision | of the proud.**

Reflection

What is the posture of the psalmist in this psalm? What does the psalmist ask for? One of the things I continue to be convinced of is that we (as well-to-do white Americans) often are the proud, and the ones at ease. As we pray this psalm, we are praying that God will help us to hear and understand and be merciful to those who we might be contemptuous of. (I guess I am still a preacher.) What do you think?

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.

²I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Reflection

Paul tells the Corinthians a strange story in this text (verses 2-4), which he says was so overwhelming an encounter with Christ that he can't speak of it. Have you ever had such an experience—so overwhelming it changed you forever but you can't put it into words? He is telling this story, not in order to boast. (verse 5) Why does he speak of what he can't find words for? (verse 6) What does he say about his “thorn in the flesh”? (verse 7) Why do you think his prayer that it be removed was not answered affirmatively? (verse 8) How did God answer this prayer? (verse 9) What does it mean to you when the Lord tells him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness”? Have you ever experienced God's grace being sufficient for you, and God's power being made perfect in your weakness? How would you

describe it? Our culture says (or implies) “whoever is strong is strong, and whoever is weak is weak.” How does that differ from Paul’s statement, “Whenever I am weak, then I am strong”?

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** **“Alleluia! Give the Glory”**

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Give the glory
and the honor
to the Lord! (repeat)

***GOSPEL**

Mark 6:1-13

At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim God’s word and relieve affliction.

¹[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reflection

Where is Jesus at the beginning of this text? (verse 1) (Presumably Nazareth.) What does he do there? (verse 2) We don’t know what he said particularly, although perhaps we can assume what he said from Mark 1:14-15. What was the reaction of the hometown folks? (verses 2-3) Compare this to the people Ezekiel was called to prophesy to in our first reading. This reminds me of what people often imply when they criticize someone they know well—if we know them, they can’t be worth much. Verse 4 is often cited because it’s a truism! What great things did Jesus do in his own hometown? (verse 5) Who can be held responsible for that? I remember the quotation from a Christmas sermon by Martin Luther—“don’t say, we wouldn’t turn away that poor baby Jesus and his mother; if that’s true, why are there poor children among you?” Where did he go from there? (verse 6b) After that ministry failure in his own hometown, where does he send his disciples, and what does he tell them to do? (verses 7-10) He apparently does not expect them to succeed everywhere—he’s been to his own hometown, and he knows about Ezekiel. What are his instructions if they don’t succeed? (verse 11) What did his disciples do?

(verses 12-13) How does this story affect your own response to the call to serve others and proclaim Jesus?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

The Prophet's Voice: Speaking Truth to a Broken City

Ezekiel: The Unwelcome Prophet

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

"Open Your Ears, O Faithful People"

ELW 519

Open your ears, O faithful people,
open your ears and hear God's word.
Open your hearts, O royal priesthood,
God has come to you.

Refrain

Torah ora, Torah ora, hallelujah!
Torah ora, Torah ora, hallelujah!
Torah ora, Torah ora, hallelujah!
Torah ora, Torah ora, hallelujah!

God has spoken to the people, hallelujah!
God has spoken words of wisdom, hallelujah!
God has spoken to the people, hallelujah!
God has spoken words of wisdom, hallelujah!

They who have ears to hear the message,
they who have ears, now let them hear;
they who would learn the way of wisdom,
let them hear God's word. *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.**

***PRAYER SONG**

"The Spirit Intercedes For Us"

ELW 180

**The Spirit intercedes for us
with sighs too deep
for words to express.
Oh, oh.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Growing in faith and discipleship, we give thanks for God's merciful compassion as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Lord God, equip all your faithful people for the work of mission. When we are empty-handed, give us partners in ministry. Help us to speak boldly of your promises without reservation or fear. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord God, you breathe life into the dust of the earth. Bless the land and all who work it. Bring relief to areas of drought and famine. Send healing rains and cooling breezes to places scorched by sun and heat. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord God, when the nations are rebellious, raise up prophets and leaders to proclaim your way of justice. Provide for the needs of refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and exiles. Protect all who live in areas of war and conflict. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord God, your grace is sufficient to bring wholeness to human weakness. Restore hope to those suffering hardships, persecutions, and calamities. Strengthen all who are fragile in body, mind, or spirit *especially Klaire and Kay*, and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (pause for 10 seconds). Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord God, renew our commitment to the work of hospitality. Help us to offer a caring welcome to visitors and to those returning to the church. Help us to be living examples of your grace and your generosity. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Lord God, you equip disciples throughout the ages to proclaim your kingdom. Lead us by faith until every weakness of this world has been made perfect in the power of your everlasting glory. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we lift to you these prayers and the prayers of our hearts, trusting in your everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

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

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"We Are Called"

ELW 720

**Come! Live in the light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
to live in the freedom of the city of God.**

Refrain

**We are called to act with justice,
we are called to love tenderly;
we are called to serve one another,
to walk humbly with God.**

**Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
so hatred and blindness will be no more. *Refrain***

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Merciful God,*

C **you open wide your hand and satisfy the need of every living thing. You have set this feast before us. Open our hands to receive it. Open our hearts to embrace it. Open our lives to live it. We pray this through 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;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
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 hosts.
Heaven and earth
are 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 *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.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

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 *Come, let us eat, for now the feast is spread.*

***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 *Jesus Christ, host of this meal,*

C **you have given us not only this bread and cup, but your very self, that we may feast on
your great love. Filled again by these signs of your grace, may we hunger for your reign
of justice, may we thirst for your way of peace, for you are Lord forevermore. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May God, whose power working in us
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine,
grant you the gifts of faith and hope.
Almighty God, Father, \dagger Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.*

C Amen!

***SENDING SONG**

“Step by Step”

O God, You are my God,
and I will ever praise you.
O God, You are my God,
and I will ever praise you.
I will seek You in the morning,
and I will learn to walk in your ways,
and step by step you'll lead me,
and I will follow you all of my days. *(repeat)*

(ending)

and I will follow you all of my days,
and I will follow you all of my days,
and step by step you'll lead me,
and I will follow you all of my days.

***DISMISSAL**

☞ *Go in peace. The Spirit sends us forth to serve.*

☞ **Thanks be to God!**