

Worship

The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

August 9, 2020

Introduction

Elijah finds the presence of God not in earthquake, wind, or fire, but in the sound of sheer silence. When the disciples face a great storm on the sea, they cry out with fear. Jesus says: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Amid the storms of life, we gather to seek the calm presence of Christ that soothes our fears. In comforting words of scripture and in the refreshing bread and cup of the eucharist, God grants us peace and sends us forth to be a sign of God's presence to others.

Gathering/Announcements

P. = Pastor

W. = Worship Assistant

A. = All in attendance

Prelude: "Prelude in D Minor [BWV # 553] *Johann Sebastian Bach*

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness

P. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen.

Confession and Forgiveness

P. Let us confess our sins to God our Father.

Silence for self-examination

P. Almighty and merciful Lord,

A. We confess that we have sinned against You and one another in both our actions and our inactions. We know that in Jesus our Light has come, yet too often we choose the shadows. Gracious Lord, forgive our sin and remove the veil of darkness which shrouds our lives. Illumine us through Your Word so that we may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, in and for the world. Amen.

P. To all who receive Christ, who believe in His Name, He gives power to become children of God. Therefore, as a called and ordained minister of His Church, I declare to all who trust in Him for salvation the entire forgiveness of all your sin, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen.

Opening Hymn: # 838 "Beautiful Savior"

Schonster Herr Jesu

A. 1. Beautiful Savior, King of Creation
Son of God and Son of Man!
Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee,
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

4. Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be thine!

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

A. And also with you.

Kyrie (said)

W. Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.

A. We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.

W. Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.

A. Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.

W. Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.

A. Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!

Canticle of Praise (said)

A. Come, let us join our cheerful songs with angels round the throne; ten thousand thousand are their tongues, but all their joys are one.

**"Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry, "to be exalted thus!"
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply, "for he was slain for us!"**

**Jesus is worthy to receive honor and pow'r divine;
and blessings, more than we can give, be, Lord, forever thine.**

**Let all creation join in one to bless the sacred name
of God who sits upon the throne, and to adore the Lamb.**

Prayer of the Day

P. Let us pray.

O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

A. Amen.

First Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

On Mount Horeb, where God had appeared to Moses with typical signs of God's presence—earthquake, wind, and fire—Elijah now experienced God in "sheer silence." God assured Elijah that he is not the only faithful believer. Seven thousand Israelites are still loyal. God instructed Elijah to anoint two men as kings and to anoint Elisha as his own successor.

W. ⁹At [Horeb, the mount of God,][Elijah] came to a cave, and spent the night there. Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

¹¹He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; ¹²and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. ¹

³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁴He answered, "I have been very zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

¹⁵Then the LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. ¹⁶Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. ¹⁷Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. ¹⁸Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

W. The Word of the Lord:

A. Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13 (said)

W. ⁸I will listen to what the LORD | God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn
their | hearts to you.

A. ⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell | in our land. R**

W. ¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;
righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.

A. ¹¹**Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,
and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.**

W. ¹²The LORD will indeed | grant prosperity,
and our land will | yield its increase.

A. ¹³**Righteousness shall go be- | fore the LORD
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. R**

Second Reading: Romans 10:5-15

A right relationship with God is not something we achieve by heroic efforts. It is a gift received in the proclamation whose content is Jesus Christ. This proclaimed word creates our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence Christian proclamation is an indispensable component of God's saving actions.

W. ⁵Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." ⁶But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say?

"The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

¹⁴But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?

¹⁵And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

W. The Word of the Lord:

A. Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

A. Alleluia. I wait for | you, O LORD; in your word | is my hope.
Alleluia. (Ps. 130:5)

The Gospel

P. The holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 14th chapter.

A. Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Matthew's gospel typically portrays Jesus' disciples as people of "little faith," who fail despite their best intentions. In this story, Matthew shows how Jesus comes to the disciples when they are in trouble and sustains them in their time of fear and doubt.

P. ²²[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee], while he dismissed the crowds.²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them.

²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea.²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus.³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased.³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

P. The Gospel of the Lord:

A. Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon: "Having Faith in God"

Have you ever noticed that fear can cause people to do some really stupid things? The story was told about 6 years ago where a Serbian man named Lucas was a victim of a giant tsunami that devastated countries around the Indian Ocean.

Lucas was safely at home in Serbia in Europe at the time. However, he was watching television and he was so shocked when he saw the tsunami footage on TV and heard the warning that he jumped out his apartment window.

As he fell from the second floor, it occurred to him that the tsunami was not actually a threat to southern Serbia in Europe but it was too late to avoid impact: he suffered two broken legs and a damaged spine.

Recovering later from his tsunami injuries, Lucas threatened to sue the local television station for announcing that "the tsunami is coming our way," and people should "immediately evacuate." A spokesperson for the television station said Lucas must have misunderstood the reporter's words.

Have you heard things on TV that have made you feel like jumping out of a window? It is true - fear makes people do very stupid things.

Several years ago the Sunday supplement magazine, USA Weekend, ran a cover story titled: "Fear: What Americans Are Afraid of Today." In a scientific poll, the magazine uncovered the things Americans fear most:

54% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of being in a car crash.

53% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of having cancer.

50% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of inadequate Social Security.

49% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of not having enough money for retirement

35% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of getting Alzheimer's.

33% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of being a victim of individual violence.

32% are "afraid" or "very afraid" of being unable to pay current debts.

Yes, fear can be a very dominant force in our lives, if we allow it.

Now, in our gospel lesson last week, Jesus had fed 5,000 men, and additional women and children, with just five small loaves of bread and two fish. Now Christ needed some time alone. He sent the crowds home and the disciples out in a boat on the Sea of Galilee while he went to a mountain to pray.

Now, the Sea of Galilee is a large body of water, eight miles wide by thirteen miles long. Of the twelve disciples, Peter, Andrew, James and John were all fishermen. They knew the Sea of Galilee very well. They knew that the Sea of Galilee was subject to strong gusts of wind. The late afternoon and evening was not a good time to be out in the middle of this body of water.

Maybe that is why Matthew tells us that Jesus “made the disciples” get into the boat. Perhaps the four fishermen could already tell that a storm was brewing. The boat was a considerable distance from land and was being battered by the waves, says Matthew, because the wind was against them.

And shortly before dawn Jesus went out to the boat, walking on the water. It is difficult enough for us to imagine someone walking on a sea when it is calm, but try to imagine someone walking on the water when the wind is whipping the surface and large waves are forming.

The disciples were already uneasy in the storm. Now when they saw Jesus walking on the water, they were terrified. “It is a ghost,” they cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid..”

And **that is Christ’s word for us this day. “Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid.”** In the face of difficult economic times, in the face of declining health, in the face of the existence of the coronavirus, in the face of concern about a loved one dealing with illness or a teenage dealing with an assortment of issues, do not be afraid. Christ is with you.

Then in the midst of this inspiring story, Simon Peter provides a little comic relief. “Lord, if it is you,” Peter called to Jesus, “command me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” Jesus said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, Peter was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”

Simon Peter discovered very quickly that he wasn’t Jesus. He also discovered the danger in focusing on his situation and not on the Savior. He was afraid and began to sink. Immediately, says Matthew, Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” Jesus said to him, “why did you doubt?”

You see, **the worst thing we can do in a storm is to let go of our faith.** That is the most important thing we need to see and understand. If we let go of our faith, we will surely sink. However, if we will just hold on to our faith and look for Christ's hand reaching out to us, we can make it through any storm or difficulty.

I have to tell you that, if it was not for my faith in God and my reliance on him, I don't think I would have been able to make it through the tragedy when my one son, Eric, was shot and killed in a random shooting in the year 2000 when he was just 30 years old.

Yes, the worst thing we can do in the midst of a storm is to lose our faith, to look down at the waves, to lose our confidence in our God. We need to keep our eyes upon Christ.

We need to see his hand extended to us, reaching out to catch us just as it was extended to Simon Peter. And sometimes we need to remember that hand is extended through our church family and other Christian friends.

The point is, Christ is able to deliver us from the storm or the difficulty. Christ can be with us in all circumstances. As Paul wrote in the third chapter of Ephesians: "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"

Matthew concludes this passage by writing: "when they climbed into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Hear Christ's words, "Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid." God is here for us at all times and in all circumstances. We need to only rely on him and trust him to enable us to get through the difficulties we may face.

Indeed, the worst thing we can do in a storm is to let go of our faith. Christ is able to bring us through any problem or difficulty. Trust him. Believe in him.

He is our Lord and Savior. If we turn to him in faith and trust, he will help us through the many different circumstances in which we find ourselves in our life.

Christ is the Lord of heaven and earth. Do not be afraid! Amen.

The peace of God that passes all human understanding, keep your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Hymn of the Day: # 756 "Eternal Father, Strong to Save" *Melita*

- A.** 1. Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm has bound the restless wave,
Who bade the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
Oh, hear us when we cry to thee
For those in peril on the sea.
4. O Trinity of love and pow'r,
All trav'lers guard in danger's hour
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them where so e'er they go;
Thus evermore shall rise to thee
Glad hymns and praise from land and sea.

Peace

- P.** The peace of Christ be with you always.
A. **And also with you.**

The Apostles' Creed

- P.** Let us now confess our faith with the words of the Apostles' Creed.
- A.** **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 into hell,
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.**

Prayers of Intercession

W. Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

For your Church in the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid." May we follow Christ wherever he leads. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day *especially Pastor Philip and Nancy Williams (upon the death of Nancy's mother, Hiltegerd Mellish), Pastor Cyril Hurnyak, Pat Brick, Merlinda Bisese, Denise and Pat Wylie, Kenneth Shoemaker, and Carol Miller, those suffering from the coronavirus, and those whom we now name in our hearts before You.* Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. For our congregation. You have gathered us today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. Caring God, be with us as we continue to live through this coronavirus pandemic. Grant us the grace to look to You, who turns all things to the good for them that love You. Grant the necessary wisdom and success to our scientists and doctors who strive to find the cures and vaccines so that this pandemic may be overcome and that we may return to a more normal life. May we show Christian compassion as we reach out to those experiencing grief and need during this time. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

W. We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church from all times and places, and for the saints in our lives and in our community whom you have gathered to yourself. Lord, in your mercy,

A. hear our prayer.

P. In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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

**A. Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

P. The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A. Amen.

Dismissal

W. Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

A. Thanks be to God.

Postlude: "Fugue in D Minor" [BWV # 553] *Johann Sebastian Bach*

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