FEAST OF ST. JAMES THE ELDER, APOSTLE JULY 25, 2021

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

X X X

PRELUDE Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me

Arr.: Curtis Fletcher

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #715

Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me

- Jesus, Savior, pilot me Over life's tempestuous sea; Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal. Chart and compass come from Thee. Jesus, Savior, pilot me.
- 2 As a mother stills her child,
 Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
 Boist'rous waves obey Thy will
 When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"
 Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea,
 Jesus, Savior, pilot me.
- 3 When at last I near the shore
 And the fearful breakers roar
 Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
 Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
 May I hear Thee say to me,
 "Fear not, I will pilot thee."

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the \(\mathbb{H}\) Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,

who made heaven and earth.

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

(We observe a moment of silence for self-reflection.)

Together we pray:

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

1 To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;
Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.

2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—

3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
"Amen!" our glad reply.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. O gracious God,

Your servant and apostle James was the first among the Twelve to suffer martyrdom for the name of Jesus Christ. Pour out upon the leaders of Your Church that spirit of self-denying service that they may forsake all false and passing allurements and follow Christ alone, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

X X X

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Acts 11:27-12:5

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

About that time Herod the king laid violent hands on some who belonged to the church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. This was during the days of Unleavened Bread. And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people. So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 56 (Read responsively)

Be gracious to me, O God, for man tramples on me; all day long an attacker oppresses me; my enemies trample on me all day long, for many attack me proudly.

When I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.
In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.
What can flesh do to me?

All day long they injure my cause; all their thoughts are against me for evil.

They stir up strife, they lurk; they watch my steps, as they have waited for my life.

For their crime will they escape?
In wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle.

Are they not in your book?

Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call.
This I know, that God is for me.
In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise,

in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.What can man do to me?I must perform my vows to you, O God;I will render thank offerings to you.

For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

SECOND LESSON Romans 8:28-39

We know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL Mark 10:35-45

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 10th chapter **Glory to You, O Lord.**

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to [Jesus] and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Today in the church we remember our brother James – an apostle sent by of our Lord Jesus and martyr in his cause. This is James' feast day – July 25th – the day in the church year dedicated to this saintly follower of our Lord.

As we remember James, it occurs to me that one of our charges should be to review a little history. In the Bible, there appears to be three followers of Jesus named James. Two of these were numbered among the Twelve Apostles – James the son of Zebedee and James the Son of Alphaeus. That first James, also known for being the brother of John, is the one we are celebrating today. The third James is known as both "James the Just" and "James the brother of our Lord." Some people believe that the last two James' are actually the same person. But that is a minority view.

To further distinguish these James', the scriptures at one place calls the second James "James the younger" (Mark 15:40). This gives rise to the tradition of calling the one named first "James the Elder" or "James the Greater," and the second "James the Less" or just James.

All three James' have feast days dedicated to them. All three played important roles in the church. And this fact of three men sharing the same name in the scriptures can perhaps suggest some lessons for us. For instance, it can remind us that there is only one who, as the scriptures teach, has the "name above all names." That is Jesus. He is the truly great one. He is the one we worship. No one shares his status. He stands alone.

As well, the sharing of names among the apostles can remind us to think of the close relationship that followers of Jesus are to have. We are to seek a unity among us and celebrate our commonality. Perhaps one good way of doing that on this day is to remember and give thanks for all those James', Jims and Jimmys that we know. Jacobs too – for that is the Hebrew and Greek form of the name.

And while we're at it, perhaps we can also remember those places which bear this name, such as all the cities named Santiago – the Spanish form of St. James. And especially Santiago de Compostela, at the end

of the Camino de Santiago (the way of St. James) where according to tradition James' remains are found, and which has led James to become the patron saint of Spain.

We lift up the saints for a number of reasons. The church has always found this a good thing to do.

But all that being said, today is mostly about remembering what James stood for. And represented. And what he can teach us.

On this topic, it seems to me that the witness of James calls us to commit ourselves to three things: 1) standing strong in the faith, 2) being humble in the faith, and 3) living confidently in the faith. The rest of the sermon today will follow that outline.

When we think about standing strong in the faith, James is an example for us in many ways. For instance, we think about how he quickly and decisively followed Jesus when called. James was a fisherman hard at work when Jesus first approached him. Mark tells us that he and his brother immediately left both their nets and their father in the boat and followed Jesus. This took guts. And it was no mere act of curiosity. James committed valuable time and energy, and gave up valuable work and relationships, to discover what Jesus was all about. God's work was obviously very important to James, and when James sensed that God was calling, he stood up.

Soon thereafter, as we heard these past few weeks, James joined the other disciples in heading out for mission work of his own. This tells us that James wasn't just a learner; he was also a doer. He took bold steps. He heard a further call of Jesus and stood up strongly once again.

James' strength is, in fact, attested to by Jesus himself. Jesus called James and his brother "Boanerges," which means "sons of thunder." We're not exactly sure why Jesus called them this – there is no context to this name. Mark just includes it when listing the apostles. But the designation must certainly have come from somewhere. And it must certainly have implied some kind of strength. One doesn't receive the name "son of thunder" for being wimpy.

What's more, James was one of three disciples of Jesus that got to see some of Jesus' most spectacular acts. Only Peter, James and John got to see the Transfiguration of Jesus. And only these three witnessed the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead and Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. James must have distinguished himself in some way to be included at these times.

The scriptural record of James certainly points to one who was strong in faith. And this should inspire us to be the same way. The Lord calls us to act on our faith. We are to be workers in the kingdom and not just spectators. And when our work is criticized or questioned, as it inevitably will be, we are to remain strong in our confession and strong in our resolve.

That being said, God has also taught us that true strength will often look more like weakness. Jesus taught that "the last shall be first and the first last." And St. Paul added that "when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

This is a message that James needed to learn. And the scriptures share some of the ways he learned it, giving us clues, also, as to how difficult this was for him.

The scriptures tell us, for example, about a time when Jesus was criticized by some opponents, and James and John suggested that Jesus should bring down fire upon them. Jesus strongly rebuked James and John for making that suggestion. Bringing down fire was not Jesus' way.

Likewise, when James and the two others were alone with Jesus during his night of prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, the three disciples fell asleep. They couldn't stay awake – even in that critical time. Jesus used the occasion to explain that "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And then there is the episode we read about in the Gospel reading for today. James and his brother John came to Jesus seeking places of honor for themselves, saying: "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." To that audacious request – showing just how weak their flesh was – Jesus

responded in ways meant to humble them. First, he told them that they "didn't know what they were asking." And then he spoke of the humility one must embrace if they are to truly be his follower, asking them if they could "drink the cup he was to drink and be baptized with the baptism with which he would be baptized." This question made it clear that following him would not be easy, and that it would involve being humbled.

As James and the others continued to listen to Jesus and watch his actions, they would eventually learn the full extent of what Jesus meant that day. Jesus drank the cup of suffering as he was arrested, tried and convicted. And the baptism with which Jesus was baptized was his awful death upon a cross.

This death was, of course, the ultimate humbling – at least in the eyes of the world. But we know that it was also the ultimate sign of strength. For Jesus died willingly, as a sacrifice for the sin of others – including your sins and mine.

Over time, James and the other apostles learned this lesson. And when Jesus was raised from the dead, they had the message confirmed. They knew for certain the blessings of standing strong in the faith and of being humble in the faith.

And with that certainty, they could then also live confidently in the faith. And so can we.

Our first lesson today, which tells us about James' death, also includes information about the early church – given in order to explain the context of the death. And here we get a picture of the good things that were happening among the believers. We see prophets guiding the fledgling group via helpful warnings and the church responding with care for its members by donating relief to those in need.

Into this beautiful life of the believers also came painful tragedies. James was killed. And not only that, but others were violently hurt, and Peter was arrested. Furthermore, these things were done not by some mob but by the leader of the government, Herod, who knew he could score political points through them.

James' death by Herod – Herod Agrippa to be precise – was reminiscent of the death of John the Baptist by another Herod, Herod Antipas. Both deaths were beheadings, done by a sword. And both deaths were meant to suppress God's work in Jesus Christ.

But neither death could do this. In fact, such assaults only caused the Christ-following movement to grow. God's strength was being furthered in these weaknesses. And Christians continued to live ever-more confidently.

Our reading in Acts 12 ended with Peter in prison. But if we were to read on, we would hear how Peter was rescued from prison by an angel. And then, at the end of the chapter, we would hear about the sudden death of Herod, who was struck down by an angel of the Lord.

Herod's death, as attested also by the Jewish historian Josephus, resulted from his refusal to deny claims of divinity that some followers attributed to him. And this serves as a reminder that, as we stated earlier, there is only one "name above all names" – Jesus Christ. And it gives witness, too, that the Gospel of Jesus will not be thwarted.

These messages are echoed throughout the book of Acts. And seen in the church's history as well. Again and again, we see that God will lead his people through great challenges, difficult decisions, and even deadly attacks. From weakness he will bring strength. And God will raise up new leaders, too; even as he will raise up all believers from the dead on the last day.

Today we remember all these things. And we give thanks for those who have brought them to our attention through their bravery and strength – people like James and all the apostles, martyrs and leaders who have been faithful. We remember the lessons they learned. And the way our Lord patiently taught them.

And we remember, too, that our Lord is patiently teaching each of us. And that through his teaching he will help us to stand strong in the faith, and walk humbly in the faith, and live confidently in the faith

throughout the times of our challenges. Until that day when we join James and all the saints in the blessed life to come.

May it be so. In the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY (Stand) #754 Sts. 1, 4-6

Entrust Your Days and Burdens (Alternate Tune: Angel's Story)

- 1 Entrust your days and burdens
 To God's most loving hand;
 He cares for you while ruling
 The sky, the sea, the land.
 For He who guides the tempests
 Along their thund'rous ways
 Will find for you a pathway
 And guide you all your days.
- 4 Leave all to His direction;
 His wisdom rules for you
 In ways to rouse your wonder
 At all His love can do.
 Soon He, His promise keeping,
 With wonder-working pow'rs
 Will banish from your spirit
 What gave you troubled hours.
- O blessèd heir of heaven, You'll hear the song resound Of endless jubilation When you with life are crowned. In your right hand your maker Will place the victor's palm, And you will thank Him gladly With heaven's joyful psalm.
- Our hands and feet, Lord, strengthen; With joy our spirits bless Until we see the ending Of all our life's distress. And so throughout our lifetime Keep us within Your care And at our end then bring us To heav'n to praise You there.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

In praise of Him who rules earth, sea and sky, and in thanksgiving for the blessings of creation and life that come from His abundant goodness, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would give us boldness to speak of His awesome deeds and sing always of His righteousness; and that we would follow in the steps of the blessed saints like James in offering ourselves as sacrifices for the work of Jesus our Savior, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That our Lord, who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, would be glorified in His Church; and that He would ground us in love, give us a faith rooted in Christ's promises, and strengthen us in the hope that surpasses all human wisdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would renew us in Baptismal grace, that he would bless our families and make marriages strong and fruitful according to His will; and that God's Word would rule every home – uniting it in forgiveness and causing Christ to dwell in every heart through faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That the Lord of might would bless our nation and all nations of the world; that he would spare us and future generations from wickedness and destruction; and that our leaders would rule according to God's will and under God's protection, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

That God would give healing and strength to the sick and those in need, especially Nadine the mother of Betty, Ann, Arlo, Sophia, Dolly, Melissa, Gloria, Norma, Trudy, Mary Ann, June, Peter, Wendy, Halle, Arthur, Ron, Jim, and those we name in our hearts at this time ______. For their care, protection, and encouragement, let us pray to the Lord: Lord, have mercy.

That God would keep our hearts from becoming hardened by indifference or any frustration in this world, and that He would lead us to His blessed Sacrament with repentance and faith to receive there the forgiveness of sins and confidence according to Christ's New Testament, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever. **Amen.**

X X X

THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION (Stand)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

Holy, holy, holy Lord
God of Sabaoth adored;
Heaven and earth with full acclaim
shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest,
sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes
in the name of the Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

You once proclaimed Your saving promise through the prophets of Israel, and by the apostles and evangelists You published the good news of Your saving promise fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Grant that we, being instructed in the doctrine of the blessed apostles and evangelists, may faithfully eat His body and drink His blood and declare His salvation to all the world.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away; O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

O Jesus Christ true Lamb of God You take the sin of the world away; Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. Masks should be kept on except for the moment of consuming the elements. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.

COMMUNION MUSIC

On the Wings of an Eagle (Isiah 40:29-31)

By: Michael A Schmid

Lift, Lift me up on the wings of an eagle Soar, Spirit, Soar! Lift me high, high above! I call to you. My strength renew Come fill me with your power Lift me up into the sky to fly

You are God, my Lord
Everlasting you are
The mighty creator of all things near and far
My strength is only you, your cross and empty grave
Yours alone the healing hand
Yours alone the power to save

When I'm weak, O Lord
When I stumble and fall
When my soul has grown weary and my back's to the wall
I just call on Your name, my Holy God on High
Give me strength so I can run!
Give me wings so I can fly!

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)

BENEDICTION

- 1 Guide me, O Thou great Redeemer,
 Pilgrim through this barren land.
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
 Hold me with Thy pow'rful hand.
 Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more;
 Feed me till I want no more.
- Open now the crystal fountain Whence the healing stream doth flow; Let the fiery, cloudy pillar Lead me all my journey through. Strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer, Be Thou still my strength and shield; Be Thou still my strength and shield.
- 3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
 Bid my anxious fears subside;
 Death of death and hell's destruction,
 Land me safe on Canaan's side.
 Songs of praises, songs of praises
 I will ever give to Thee;
 I will ever give to Thee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE

"The Heavens Are Telling" from The Creation By: Franz Joseph Haydn

Those serving:

Sunday, July 18, 8:30 a.m.: Greeter: Jim Easterly Comm. assist: Judy Koucky

Reader: Judy Koucky

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Marian Robinson Comm. assist: Jill Hecht Reader: Dan Buuck

Soloist: Tamara Brown

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