

THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

FEBRUARY 13, 2022

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



PRELUDE *I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus* Setting: Charles W. Ore

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #729

I Am Trusting Thee, Lord Jesus

**1 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.**

**4 I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying
All my need.**

**2 I am trusting Thee for pardon;
At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.**

**5 I am trusting Thee for power;
Thine can never fail.
Words which Thou Thyself shalt give me
Must prevail.**

**3 I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood.**

**6 I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus;
Never let me fall.
I am trusting Thee forever
And for all.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ 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.

(Silence for reflection)

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

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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; and for the peace of the whole world and the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

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

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise; and for the well-being of the whole church of God in Christ, 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.

HYMN OF PRAISE

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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 Lord,
graciously hear the prayers of Your people, that we who justly suffer the consequence of our sin may be mercifully delivered by Your goodness to the glory of Your name; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Thus says the Lord:

“Cursed is the man who trusts in man
and makes flesh his strength,
whose heart turns away from the Lord.
He is like a shrub in the desert,
and shall not see any good come.
He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness,
in an uninhabited salt land.
“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.
He is like a tree planted by water,
that sends out its roots by the stream,
and does not fear when heat comes,
for its leaves remain green,
and is not anxious in the year of drought,
for it does not cease to bear fruit.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 1 (Read responsively)

Blessèd is the man
who walks not in the counsel of the wicked,
nor stands in the way of sinners,
nor sits in the seat of scoffers;
**but his delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law he meditates day and night.**

He is like a tree
planted by streams of water
that yields its fruit in its season,
and its leaf does not wither.
In all that he does, he prospers.
**The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.**

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
**for the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.**

**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

1 Corinthians 15:12-20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

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

GOSPEL

Luke 6:17-26

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 6th chapter

Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus] came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

“Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in

heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

“Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

“Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

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:

As you probably know, the Super Bowl will be played later today. This year’s game is the Bengals vs. the Rams. Both teams have had great seasons, and it should be a very entertaining game.

From what I can tell, this year’s game doesn’t seem to be a contest between two different ways of playing. By that I mean that there doesn’t appear to be a clear philosophical or strategic difference in the way the two teams try to win. One team, for example, doesn’t focus more on offense while the other focuses more on defense. Maybe a better-trained eye would think otherwise. Maybe there are some clear differences. But I don’t see them.

I mention ways of playing because today’s scripture readings make use of something we call “two ways” teaching. This is a form of teaching that is found in many places in the scriptures. The message usually given is that there are two ways one can go in life: one that is good and one that is bad. Or, as sometimes stated: one that is the way of life and one that is the way of death.

The language behind the two ways isn’t always the same, but the concept is. Perhaps the clearest expression of it is found in Deuteronomy chapter 30. In that chapter, Moses addresses the people of Israel just before they are about to enter the promised land. And as a means of culminating his address he says these words: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in his ways, and by keeping his commandments and his statutes and his rules, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess” (Deut. 30:15-18).

The two ways are presented as clear and contrasting paths. Between the two there is a clear and obvious choice. Moses, in fact, later in that same speech, urges the people to choose the better direction, saying: “Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days.”

In today’s first reading, from Jeremiah 17, the prophet relays words from God that also speak of the two ways. And here God is concerned especially about the people’s faith. We see this because the two ways are described as the “one who trusts in God” vs. “the one who trusts in man.”

God describes the second way first, saying: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD.” Then, adding an explanation of what this way is like, God uses an illustration, saying that the man who chooses it is “like a shrub in the desert and shall not see any good come.”

By contrast, the other way – that of trusting in God – leads to good. “Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,” he says. God then also illustrates this way, saying of the one who chooses it: “He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream and does not fear when heat comes.”

You may have noticed that this same illustration was found also in today's Psalm. Psalm One famously begins: "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

Here we note that the two ways of life are described in their moral dimension. The one who chooses the good way delights in the law of the Lord. Those who choose the bad way are called the "wicked" and are not like those who prosper, but instead are like chaff that the wind drives away. The two ways are thus described as the way of the righteous vs. the way of the wicked. The Psalm states this specifically in its concluding verse: "for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish."

Today's Gospel reading appears to be yet another example of this "two ways" technique of teaching. Jesus seems to say that some ways of living are blessed, while other ways of living bring woe. "Blessed are you who are poor," but "woe to you who are rich," etc.

But while this short sermon from Jesus definitely resembles the two ways approach and is certainly meant to recall it, Jesus' message is different.

Yes, there are two ways... one reflecting the way of God and the other reflecting the way of man; one leading to life and the other leading to death. But Jesus also turns on its head much of the logic and assumptions associated with these two ways.

For example, according to the Psalm the way of the righteous was supposed to lead to prosperity. "In all things he prospers," said the Psalm. But Jesus says it is the poor who are blessed. What's going on?

To determine what Jesus is saying, we must understand a second teaching concept – one that Jesus uses frequently, and one that serves as a good description of his overall message.

This concept is especially prominent in Luke's Gospel. There it is found first upon the lips of Jesus' mother. In her great song – the Magnificat – sung after she had been told about the impending birth of her miraculous child, Mary rejoices in God's faithfulness. Included in her recounting are ways in which God reverses people's fortunes. She says: "he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty" (Luke 1:52-53).

Here we have words pointing toward something called "the great reversal." According to this concept, Jesus reverses the expected course of many things in life. And his doing so leads to great and surprising blessings for those who follow him.

For the remainder of the sermon I'd like us to think about three of these great reversals of Jesus – each of which is alluded to in today's Gospel text.

The first of these, is that Jesus reverses our understanding of life.

Jesus challenges the prevailing wisdom of our world. We think that richer is always better. We think that full stomachs, lots of laughs and lots of compliments are what life is all about. But as Jesus makes clear, they're not.

"Blessed are you who are poor," Jesus says. Many of those listening to him were poor – especially those who had left their jobs and their homes to follow him. As were those who were sick and seeking his healing. They were poor, hungry, sad and reviled. Why, then, does Jesus say they are blessed?

It wasn't their poverty itself that blessed them. Being poor is not a preferable condition. Unless it is needed for one to learn to better depend on God.

The poor were "blessed" because they were listening to Jesus. And because Jesus would help them.

Some of that help would come in the form of future blessings: “You shall be satisfied... You shall laugh... and great is your reward in heaven.” The blessings might come soon, or only be realized in the next life. But they would come.

At the same time, some of that help was already happening at present. “Yours is the kingdom,” said Jesus. The kingdom is where God is acting. As the people were listening to Jesus, God was acting to teach them, encourage them, bring them together and heal their wounds. To live in God’s kingdom is a blessing all of its own.

Living in the kingdom means knowing that we have a good and gracious King. This then speaks to a second characteristic of the Great Reversal: Jesus reverses our understanding about God.

We are told – and like to believe – that God is mighty, just, and in control of all. But then we look at our world and get the impression that perhaps God is none of these. Which troubles us. And we consider giving up our faith.

Jesus gives us a clearer view. Jesus shows us how God once gave up his power and took on human flesh. As the Godman, Jesus Christ, he became the one who was poor and hungry, and who wept and was hated by others. He became the very embodiment of his own teaching.

“The Great Reversal” describes the God who came among us and appeared to act in weakness – living a life filled with trouble and then dying on a cross.

What kind of a God acts like this? Only a God who serves. As the followers of Jesus would eventually find out, and as we are privileged to know too, Jesus died to serve a purpose. He died to pay the penalty of our sin. His life was offered on behalf of ours. We who have chosen the way of death far too often, are given life by him who chose the way of the cross.

And then, of course, there was one final reversal. Jesus rose from the dead. Death could not hold him. Justice had been satisfied, and the Just One lived.

The Great Reversal of Jesus Christ’s resurrection shows us that there will be a reversal of our destiny too. Jesus mentioned it already in his sermon: “your reward is great in heaven.” Today’s second reading, from 1 Corinthians 15, tells us even more. There we are told that Jesus Christ is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” Just as Jesus was brought back from death to life, so also will we – with sins forgiven – be brought from death to life, both now and at the end of time.

Our destiny is heaven– a place where there will be no more poverty or hunger, no more sorrow or hatred. Our destiny is with the God who reverses our downward spiral and brings us to life.

Yes, there are two ways we can go: the way of life and the way of death. The way of life is to follow Jesus.

This way will sometimes involve poverty and hunger. And it will lead to times of sadness and persecution too. But it will also lead to great blessings – many of which can be seen among us even now, with many more to come in future days.

In Luke’s Gospel, there is one great, final illustration of the “two ways.” You know the story. We will read it again in our next liturgical season.

Luke tells how at the death of Jesus two thieves were next to him – both also being crucified. One thief taunts Jesus by saying, “if you’re really the Son of God, why don’t you come down off that cross.” But the other humbly says, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

That second thief walked the path of life. What about you?

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.” May God lead you in that way – now and always. Amen.

1 Songs of thankfulness and praise,
Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise,
Manifested by the star
To the sages from afar,
Branch of royal David's stem
In Thy birth at Bethlehem:
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

2 Manifest at Jordan's stream,
Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
And at Cana wedding guest
In Thy Godhead manifest;
Manifest in pow'r divine,
Changing water into wine;
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

3 Manifest in making whole
Palsied limbs and fainting soul;
Manifest in valiant fight,
Quelling all the devil's might;
Manifest in gracious will,
Ever bringing good from ill;
Anthems be to Thee addressed,
God in man made manifest.

4 Sun and moon shall darkened be,
Stars shall fall, the heav'ns shall flee;
Christ will then like lightning shine,
All will see His glorious sign;
All will then the trumpet hear,
All will see the Judge appear;
Thou by all wilt be confessed,
God in man made manifest.

5 Grant us grace to see Thee, Lord,
Present in Thy holy Word—
Grace to imitate Thee now
And be pure, as pure art Thou;
That we might become like Thee
At Thy great epiphany
And may praise Thee, ever blest,
God in man made manifest.

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.

OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH (Stand)

Heavenly Father, Your kingdom has been made manifest in the preaching and miracles of Jesus Christ. Gather together Your great multitude from every nation and from Judea's remnant, that all may know of your salvation and follow you in the way of life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Grant, O Lord, that Your people may always hold fast to the preaching of the resurrection, not having a futile faith that leaves them in sin, nor holding only to the hope of this world, but a faith that believes the testimony of God that Christ is risen and we shall arise as well. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Preserve your people, O Lord, through families which reflect your Wisdom and your Spirit. Give parents diligence and persistence in their duties to teach the faith in word and example. Keep all children in the promise You made to them in their Baptism. And let the patience, kindness and endurance of Christian love have no end among us. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O God, do not let our rewards and blessings consist in the treasures and goods of this world. But give us joy in every sorrow, and satisfaction in every hunger, knowing that if we have You, we lack nothing and will receive an eternal reward in Christ that cannot fail. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Be near to those who are troubled by any unclean spirit, memory or thought. Extend your care to the sick and all who need Your healing, especially those on our prayer list and those we name in our hearts at this time... Send forth Your power in the name of Christ Jesus, that they would hear Your Word and be cured. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bless all who trust in You and come to your table to receive the body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. Strengthen them in their faith and draw them closer to one another through this sacrament. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, Your Son is not only risen from the dead but is also the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Preserve us in the confidence of our resurrection, giving us hope beyond this life. Comfort those who mourn, especially Aaron and his family, with the certainty of Christ's resurrection. And let us all live in confident expectation as we await the consummation of all things and the joy of the new creation that awaits. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We entrust all these petitions to Your care, loving Father, confident in Your great mercy for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is worshiped together with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

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...evermore praising You and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n 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**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. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.

COMMUNION MUSIC "Largo" from Winter Vivaldi/arr. Wolff

NUNC DIMITTIS

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**1 O Lord, now let Your servant
Depart in heav'nly peace,
For I have seen the glory
Of Your redeeming grace:
A light to lead the Gentiles
Unto Your holy hill,
The glory of Your people,
Your chosen Israel.**

**2 All glory to the Father,
All glory to the Son,
All glory to the Spirit,
Forever Three in One;
For as in the beginning,
Is now, shall ever be,
God's triune name resounding
Through all eternity.**

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN #486

If Christ had not been Raised from Death
(Alternate Tune: All Saints New)

1 If Christ had not been raised from death

Our faith would be in vain,
Our preaching but a waste of breath,
Our sin and guilt remain.
But now the Lord is ris'n indeed;
He rules in earth and heav'n:
His Gospel meets a world of need—
In Christ we are forgiv'n.

2 If Christ still lay within the tomb

Then death would be the end,
And we should face our final doom
With neither guide nor friend.
But now the Savior is raised up,
So when a Christian dies
We mourn, yet look to God in hope—
In Christ the saints arise!

3 If Christ had not been truly raised

His Church would live a lie;
His name should nevermore be praised,
His words deserve to die.
But now our great Redeemer lives;
Through Him we are restored;
His Word endures, His Church revives
In Christ, our risen Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

POSTLUDE *All Saints New* Setting: Paul Soulek

Those serving:

Sunday, February 13, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Bob Juenger
Comm. assist: Jim Easterly
Reader: Norm Williams

10:30 a.m.:

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

Acknowledgements

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