

**Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish**  
**Order of Sunday Worship- 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost– July 14th, 2024**  
**At Sauk Valley Lutheran Church**

**Prelude**

Emily Larson, Musician

**Welcome/Announcements**

**Invocation:**

P: We gather in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

**Opening Prayer:**

P: O Lord, our Maker, Redeemer, and Comforter, we are assembled in Your presence to hear Your holy Word. We pray that You would open our hearts by Your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching of Your Word we may be taught to repent of our sins, to believe on Jesus in life and in death, and grow day by day in grace and holiness. Hear us for Christ's sake. **C: Amen.**

**Hymn:**

*“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”*

Praise #398

**Confession of Sin:**

P: Let us bow before the Lord and confess our sins.

**C: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean, and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Therefore, we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Kyrie:**

*C: O God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us!*  
*O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us!*  
*O God the Holy Spirit, true Comforter, have mercy upon us!*

**Absolution:**

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us, and has given his only Son to die for us, and for his sake God forgives all our sins. To those who believe in his name he gives power to become the children of God, and has promised them his Holy Spirit. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Grant this Lord unto us all.

**C: Amen.**

**Gloria:**

P: Glory be to God in the highest.

*C: And on earth peace, good will toward men.*

P: The Lord be with you.

*C: And also with you.*

**Prayer of the Day:**

P: Let us pray together.

**C: O God, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen**

**Psalm 85:8-13**

**First Reading- Amos 7:7-15**

**Second Reading- Ephesians 1:3-14**

**Gospel Reading- Mark 6:14-29**

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

*C: God be praised for his glad tidings!*

**Apostles Creed**

**C: I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty from whence he shall 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 life everlasting. Amen.**

**Children's Message – "Jesus Loves Me"**

**Offering and Offertory: *We give Thee but Thine own, whate'er the gift might be. All that we have is Thine alone, a trust O Lord from Thee.***

**Hymn: "In Times Like These"**

Praise #420

**Sermon**

**Pastor Lexy Carson**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

When I was in Sunday School there were two teachers who would take all of us cherub kids and gather us around a big sandbox on wheels and they would teach us the lesson for the week with characters in the sandbox. I can still picture the little figures of Mary and Joseph, Noah's Arc, Daniel and the Lions den but this lesson I just read for you of John the Baptist being beheaded, that one never made the cut for our teachers. The closest memory I have to an educator teaching us about beheading was in my international relations course in high school where we did a French Revolution simulation and if the time came in the simulation for our "character to die" our teacher took a sheet of paper drew a stick figure, grabbed the paper cut and whack. We were beheaded.

When we first hear this Gospel lesson and we reach the end and I said the Gospel of our Lord, it seems odd. This is the Gospel? The good news of Jesus Christ? Where is the good? This sure doesn't sound like the Gospel, it sounds more like a Shakespeare tale if anything with the weird turns of people and family relations. Yet this is our Gospel, let us dive into it.

The word had been traveling that Jesus was doing miracles, healing, casting out demons and forgiving sins. The crowds were all wrestling with who this Jesus was, thinking maybe he could be Elijah or John the Baptist. It is the question of Jesus being John the Baptist that sparks the rest of the narrative for the Gospel reading of today.

It sends us into a flashback for King Herod to his relationship with John and his role in his death. Herod had married his brother's wife, and had a birthday celebration where his step daughter and

also his niece danced for the crowd Herod had gathered. He promised the girl anything so she asked her mother what to ask for, her mother hated John the Baptist because he named her sin. John named it directly, saying it was a sin for her to marry her ex-husband's brother. So in her anger she told her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist. Herod did as she asked.

This is why Herod was so terrified when he heard of the great power of Jesus. He was fearful that this was John the Baptist coming back to seek revenge on him for killing him. Herod says it was John whom I beheaded. It is in that language right there that Herod identifies his own sin. It was John whom I beheaded.

Now the interesting thing with Herod is that it sounds like he had an ear to hear the word that John the Baptist was proclaiming. Herod enjoyed listening to John but was perplexed by him. The reading makes it appear like the Spirit had partially given Herod an ear to hear of Christ. But not fully.

That's why he was torn when the time came for his step daughter to request John's death. He didn't want to kill John because he thought him to be righteous plus he feared him but he also promised an oath so he did not want to disappoint his guests. So he ordered the killing of John.

So what does this family drama in the Herod, Herodias house have to do with you? Why does the killing of John the Baptist have any significance for you?

Well you like Herod, his wife Herodias and even the daughter Herodias the second carry sin. For Herodias the mother, her sin ran so deep to the point that her anger towards John the Baptist became a part of her sin. This anger became her sin, her everything. While I'm sure you never literally asked for someone's head to be on a platter I'm sure you have had anger towards someone. An all consuming anger that determines your motives, your thoughts and shapes your life. An anger that you cannot seem to let go off. An anger that becomes your own sin. It's apparent in our nation that even opposite sides of the political aisle carry this all consuming sinful anger. Even this poor daughter that I feel deeply heart broken for, she is promised anything at all - even up to half the kingdom and she clearly desperately wants to please her mother, find love from her mother that she asks for the head of some man on a platter - to find her mother's favor. How sad is that? The all consuming power of sin.

For Herod, his sin was his own selfish self preservation. He named his own sin as killing John and it was because he wanted to maintain his image. He was concerned with how the people at the party would receive him if he went against his oath, it was this self serving image that he wanted to protect that led him to kill John the Baptist. Even prior to that he had enjoyed listening to John because he thought he could gain something from him, he feared him so he wanted to be on his good side. Hence he was so scared when he heard of this Jesus whom he thought surely had to be John coming back to get revenge. I think we have all been there, concerned with how others will perceive us. How do I make myself look good? What cost does that have? To the point that it becomes our sin.

Being a sinner sucks. Hearing your sin named sucks. But thanks be to God that you are a sinner. Because God came for you. Christ came for the sick not the well. God sent John the Baptist to come and name sin just as he did, everything he did was pointing to Jesus the coming. Not everyone heard what John had to say Herodias didn't, she was stuck in her sin neither did Herod for he also was stuck in his sin.

But today, the good news of Jesus Christ is that he came for you. In all of your sin. To forgive it all. To open your ears to hear that you are fully forgiven. That there is no sin left, nothing that he cannot forgive.

It's easy to lose sight of these opening verses to this story though but this whole passage really isn't about John the Baptist, it's about his cousin, his friend, one that he baptized, it's about Jesus Christ.

And the reason these opening verses matter so much is because the gut wrenching story that follows of the complexity, deceit and just wrongness of John the Baptist's death are only eased and relieved by the word of hope in Jesus Christ. Without Jesus being named, there really is no good news, only greed, power, people pleasing and death which we all know too well in this old world. But these opening verses, who could this Jesus be? There is just so much life, hope, promise, healing, resurrection, calm and peace in this man that we cannot comprehend how it is possible - Jesus couldn't possibly be the messiah, god himself, our savior. He has to be Elijah, or he has to be John coming back to seek revenge.

But Jesus is neither and while yes he is impossible to comprehend, he doesn't come as a mystery we need to crack. He comes bearing his name Jesus Christ, Savior, God on his sleeve and his ministry, his mission is no secret. He has come to people who are so twisted up in the complexity of their sin, stuck in their own ego, desperately trying to hold onto power with all their might, trying to please those around them no matter the cost and he comes to give them a word of promise. While John the Baptist simply held up the mirror, revealing sin Jesus actually does something about it. He comes to smash that mirror, to take care of sin once and for all, to give forgiveness where all hope seems lost.

Who is this Jesus? He's the greatest person to ever walk into your life, with the greatest promise that you are his, forgiven, absolved and at peace with God.

The peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

**Hymn:**

*"It is Well with My Soul"*

Praise #321

**Prayer of the Church:** Each prayer will end: Lord, in your mercy. **C: *Hear our prayer.***

**Holy Communion**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: *And also with you.***

P: Lift up your hearts to the Lord.

**C: *We lift up our hearts unto the Lord.***

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

**C: *It is meet and right so to do.*** P: It is truly meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and all places give thanks to you, O Lord, holy Father Through Jesus Christ, your dear son, our Lord and Savior who ascending above the heavens and sitting at your hand, poured out the Holy Spirit as he had promised upon the chosen disciples, causing the whole earth to rejoice.

Therefore with angels and archangels and all the company in heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and singing:

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***C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.***

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Invitation/Distribution

Thanksgiving-

P: The Lord be with you. ***C: And also with you.***

P: Let us give thanks and pray: We thank you Lord God almighty that you have refreshed us with these gifts; and we ask you, in your mercy, to strengthen us through these same gifts in faith toward you and in fervent love for one another; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

***C: Amen.***

### **Benediction**

P: Now may the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord make his face to shine upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon us and give us his peace.

***C: Amen, Amen, Amen.***

### **Doxology**

***C: Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

### **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**Dismissal:** P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God! Postlude**