

Salem-Sauk Valley Lutheran Parish
Order of Sunday Worship- 18th Sunday after Pentecost– September 22nd, 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:

“Beautiful Savior”

Concordia #6

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, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 54

First Reading- Jeremiah 11:18-20

Second Reading- James 3:13-4:3a, 7-8a

Gospel Reading- Mark 9:30-37

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: "There's a Friend for Little Children" Concordia #360

Sermon Pastor Lexy Carson

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

If you're anything like me, you have a checklist in your head of what is to come next. Maybe sitting in your pew this morning you are thinking about what is to come next. Well I've got to eat quick, scurry on over to Alden's for Threshing, then find some time for a little nap before doing a few chores oh then you got to plan for supper and meals for the rest of the week - the grocery list you need to put together. The list is never ending of what is to come next, what we need to prepare for to be organized and ready for the next step, next day.

And often times, the things we worry about, are anxious about coming up next are not even things we even have any need to worry about. Often times we worry for no reason, about things outside our control, things we have no sense or right even being concerned with.

The famous job interview question is always "Where do you see yourself in five years?" And lets be honest, none of us really know the answer to this nor do we really have any need or concern to even be speculating about it in the first place. Yet, we concern ourselves day in and day out about what is to come next - immediately and long term. Busying ourselves with matters outside our control that we nevertheless try to grapple with.

And this is exactly the context the disciples were wrestling with in our gospel for today. Jesus had just told the disciples, a second time in a row, that he was going to be betrayed into human hands, they will kill him and he will rise again. And they weren't really sure what to make of this, it was confusing but they do recall what we heard last week that Peter did not like this word and he rebuked Jesus and Jesus therefore called him Satan.

So upon hearing this word once again, the rest of the disciples choose the safe route, they stayed silent about it, at least with Jesus. But, they concerned themselves with this problem, this next

step on the journey to Capernaum. They argued amongst themselves on the journey, trying to stay out of earshot from Jesus, because there was of course planning that needed to be done around these matters! If Jesus is going to die, we need a succession plan! They have a bit of selective hearing right, they kind of skipped over the resurrection part but they need to know who is the greatest, who will make the final decisions, in keeping this ministry, this mission and movement once Jesus is dead and gone.

But this is certainly a very human response. We need to know what comes next and that meant deciding their pecking order. And Jesus wasn't naive to this. They thought they could simply speak out of earshot from Jesus and good luck with that.

But Jesus calls them out on this, "what were you all arguing about?" And once again, they are silent. For they knew they had no business discussing what they were discussing, this was not a matter they had any right to discuss, after all they were confused to begin with anyone. It'd be like me giving you instructions on the best harvest practices, I have no right discussing such matters - I am no expert, I'm confused by a lot of it and yet I like the disciples I am certainly concerned about it but I have no right to be discussing it, making any decisions on it.

And in the silence, in the embarrassment of Jesus calling them out - Jesus just plows on forward. He doesn't need them to answer, fess up, he knows they were discussing who was the greatest, creating their succession line. And so Jesus says "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all. Then he took a little child and put it among them, taking it in his arms and said whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me."

You guys really want to know who is the greatest? Well whoever wants to be first must be last. When I worked at a Bible Camp in SD there was always a cabin in charge of KP (kitchen party) which meant cleaning up after the meal. All the campers would be lined up and this cabin in charge would be waiting at the door to greet you and you'd have to do something silly to eat, usually they'd ask all the campers to show their favorite dance move or ask what their favorite thing at camp was so far. But every once and awhile a counselor would read this verse "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all" and then the cabin that was last in line to eat would go first and the cabin that was first would go last. I can still hear the grumbles of those campers as their spot in line was reversed.

Now the temptation with this text is to hear it as a prescription. Okay, Jesus says I need to be last so I need to try really hard to be last this week. I will make sure I always let people ahead of me in the grocery line, I will make sure I get my food last, I will make sure everyone is covered before I tend to myself. Except, by doing exactly that, hearing Jesus's word as a prescription you are trying to make yourself first. By trying to be last, you are trying to make yourself first. By attempting to be last, you are demonstrating your own ego and trying to help yourself. It doesn't work! Your sin is still there, you are trying to make sure you are at the top of the succession line. We know how this turned out for the disciples, every single one of them when the time came in the Garden of Gethsemane were ready to run. They did not want to be last anymore, they fled.

On your own you will fail, unable to be last. Jesus, their leader, the one they are following, then throws the disciples another curveball. He brings a child into the conversation. Children were viewed as the least and that is what Jesus is getting at.

He is reinforcing how the last shall be first. But you cannot make yourself last to become first no matter how much you try. Jesus isn't trying to challenge you to be the least. No, Jesus is telling you who you are.

He is telling you that you are God's chosen child. He isn't setting a prescription for you to abide by. He is depicting what is already happening. You are God's chosen child. You are completely dependent on Jesus just as a child is dependent on someone to care for them. You never grow out of being dependent on God. In fact trying to be independent of God is original sin itself, Adam and Eve trying to know as God, not trusting and longing to know and be independent. That is the original sin, where it all started. You never grow out of being dependent on God. Just as you never grow out of being your parents' child, no matter how old you are.

We are dependent on the words that Christ keeps repeating. He is going to be betrayed, killed and rise for our sake. For his chosen children's sake so that sin, death and the devil have no hold on us. He will keep repeating this beautiful message no matter how much we tire of hearing it or thinking we know it, because he knows it is the words we need to hear. The promise that we need to receive. Your sins will have no hold on you beloved child. You are dependent on me not because you are first or last but because I claim you. By claiming you, you are the greatest, so don't concern yourself with anything because God has you in the palm of his hand and his forgiveness, his mercy is all you will ever need.

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

Hymn: "Thy Little Ones, Dear Lord are We" Concordia #366

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:

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**