

Sermon followed by Service

May 14, 2023 - Confirmation Day

John 17:20-24

I see you have family here, friends here, people from all over. What are they going to say today? A friend might say: “What was that all about?” Maybe: “Do you really believe that stuff?” An older family-member might say: “I remember when I was confirmed. We had to memorize the whole Bible. We had to recite the whole catechism. We had to answer 50 questions each. You youngins have it so easy.” Mom and dad might get a bit teary-eyed and wish they could say how much they love you. Teary-eyed they might wish they could say just the right thing to make your life easier. What are they going to say today? What are they going to pray today? Take the time. Listen to what they say; listen to what they pray.

There’s someone else here today. Someone you can’t see. He’s not hiding. Inside, he’s touching your heart. In heaven, he’s watching over you with his Father; smiling, nudging his Father: “Don’t you just love them.” If you could see him, if he were standing right here, what would he say to you?

Let’s back up a step. What would he see in you? He’d see some really neat kids. Like I said, he’s nudging the Father: “Don’t you just love them.” At the same time, he sees some Judas in us, pretending to go along, but looking out for ourselves. He sees some Peter in us, thinking we’re strong and brave and ready to face the world. He sees some James and John in us

thinking we should get some glory out of this today. He sees that already the world has knocked you around a bit. He sees a hurt inside you, a darkness inside you that you don't know whether to hide or to let loose. Yes, Jesus has seen what we would be like without him. Jesus has been to hell; he's seen how we would end up, where we would end up without him. Jesus has seen us ... he's seen you at your worst, in your worst hurt; he's seen you in your worst and ugliest sin. And yet Jesus sees you with love, as a gift from his Father. He sees you with love, remembering how he died for you; remembering how he paid the price for your sin; he sees you forgiven, wearing his right life, right by God.

And what does Jesus say? If you could see Jesus here today, what would he say? For your fears, for your disgust with this world - **“Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my father's house are many rooms ... I will come back for you, that you may be where I am.”** When you're wondering how you're going to make it, when you're wondering if you have what it takes, Jesus says to you: **“I am the vine; you are the branches. If [you] remain in me and I in [you], [you] will bear much fruit.”** In other words, “Stay connected with me, I will give you what it takes, not just to make it, but I will give you what it takes to make God's difference in your world.” When you wonder whether your guilt, your fears, your failures, that darkness inside you has cut you off from God and his promises, Jesus says to you: “Peace! My body, my blood, my life and my death for you and your forgiveness. Peace.”

If we could see Jesus today, if we could hear him, what would he say? “I’m here for you. I’ve got you.” But that’s not all. What else would he say? “Don’t mess around. Follow me. Follow me close. Follow me like your life depends on it.”

And then what? After Jesus would have his say, Jesus would pray. What would he pray? We might think he’d pray that God would make our life easier, that he would give us a smooth ride. Instead, seeing the world around us trying to distract us and pull us apart ... seeing the Judas and Peter, the James and John inside us that thinks we know better, that we are better, that we deserve better than those around us, seeing all that’s in us and around us that wants to pull us apart and tear us apart ... Jesus prays that we be tight, as tight as the Father and his Son. Not just tight with Jesus, not just tight with God, but tight with each other. Tight - holding each other up. Tight - holding each other together with Jesus. Tight - working together with Jesus. Tight - taking care of each other with Jesus. Tight - together with Jesus.

Why? Tight and together, so when life blows at us, we can stand with Jesus. Tight and together, so when life comes down on us, we can stand with Jesus. But Jesus isn’t praying that we be tight and together just for ourselves.

Jesus is praying that we be tight and together because Jesus wants you to show the world what Jesus is about. He wants you to show the glory of Jesus - a glory that is better than riches and success and popularity. Jesus wants you to show his glory - the glory that reaches down into our muck to pick us up and wash us

clean, the glory that reaches out to the lonely and forgotten, the glory that holds and heals the broken. Jesus wants you to show the glory of his love and care, his strength and hope.

And for those times when your life isn't so glorious, Jesus wants you to see his glory - the glory that got Jesus through the worst day of this world, the glory that set Jesus safe back in heaven to rule at God's right hand. Why? So that on your worst days, you can see Jesus has what it takes to pick you up out of the deepest pits. And on your unGodliest days, you can know that Jesus lives to forgive you. Yes, Jesus wants you to see his glory so that you can know forever - no matter what this world says to you, no matter what this world does to you, you're following the right Savior. He won't fail you; he'll make your life right.

That's Jesus' prayer for you. That's Jesus' promise for you. Amen.

May 14, 2023

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we look up to heaven with Jesus and his disciples, and speak out confessing our faith and commitment to Christ with our confirmands.

OPENING HYMN

"A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing"

Hymn 472 vs. 1, 5, 6

A hymn of glory let us sing! New songs throughout the world shall ring:
Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ, by a road before untrod, ascends unto the throne of God.
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Be now our joy on earth, O Lord, and be our future great reward.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Then, throned with you forever, we shall praise your name eternally.
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

O risen Christ, ascended Lord, all praise to you let earth accord.
Alleluia, alleluia!

You are, while endless ages run, with Father and with Spirit one.
Alleluia, alleluia! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,**

**I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.**

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY (*Kyrie*)

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus, King of glory, on this day you ascended far above the heavens, and at God's right hand you rule the nations. Leave us not alone, we pray, but grant us the Spirit of truth that, at your command and by your power, we may be your witnesses in all the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READING

Acts 1:1–11

In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ASCENSION DAY DIALOGUE

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights above.

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts.

How majestic is the Lord’s name in all the earth!

He has set his glory above the heavens.

For the Lord is the Most High over all the earth.

He is exalted far above all gods.

God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.

God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.

The Lord reigns, let the nations tremble.

He sits enthroned between the cherubim, let the earth shake.

The throne of our God will last forever and ever.

A scepter of justice will be the scepter of his kingdom.

Praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted.

His splendor is above the earth and the heavens.

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:12–17

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 17:20–24

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

“On Christ’s Ascension I Now Build”

Hymn 476

On Christ’s ascension I now build the hope of my ascension.
This hope alone has always stilled all doubt and apprehension,
for where the head is, there as well I know his members are to dwell
when Christ shall come and call them.

Since Christ returned to claim his throne, great gifts for me obtaining,
my heart will rest in him alone, no other rest remaining,
for where my treasure went before, there all my thoughts will ever soar
to still their deepest yearning.

O grant, dear Lord, this grace to me, recalling your ascension,
that I may serve you faithfully, in thanks for my redemption;
and then, when all my days will cease, let me depart in joy and peace
in answer to my pleading.

SERMON

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

CONFIRMANDS

Ronald (RJ) Joseph Echtenacher
Addison (Zaley) Azalea Lofsness

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker 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, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there 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.

M: Gracious Father, you have adopted our brother and sister in Baptism and anointed them with your Holy Spirit. Renew and strengthen them by that same Spirit so that they may continue to grow in faith and boldly confess you before others. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Move them to faithfully hear your holy Word and joyfully receive your sacrament that they may again and again be assured of your gracious love and forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Give them the sincere desire to die each day to sin and put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Lord, in your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Protect them from the powers of evil and give them the weapons to fight against the devil. Lord, in your mercy:

C: **Hear our prayer.**

M: Keep them faithful and holy, so that they may inherit eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: **Amen.**

HYMN

“Gracious Savior, Gentle Shepherd”

Hymn 757

Gracious Savior, gentle Shepherd, children all are dear to you;
may your loving arms enfold them in your care their whole life through.
By your tending and protecting keep them safe in all they do.

Tender Shepherd, never leave them, never let them go astray;
by your warning love directed, may they walk the narrow way.
Thus direct them, thus defend them lest they fall an easy prey.

By your holy Word instruct them, fill their minds with heav’nly light;
by your pow’rful grace convince them always to approve what’s right.
Let them feel your yoke is easy, let them find your burden light.

Taught to love the holy praises which on earth your children sing,
with their lips and hearts, sincerely, glad thank-off’rings may they bring,
then with all the saints in glory join to praise their Lord and King.

MOTHER’S DAY (RESPONSIVE)

Brief intercessory prayers may be added at the end of the prayer.

Eternal God, in the beauty of Eden you created a man and a woman and brought them together in marriage. You enabled them to be fruitful and increase in number and so you established the family. Help us to see in your creating wisdom your love for parents and children.

Move us to be thankful for mothers and fathers and for all the blessings you bring to our homes.

Today we remember the mothers who loved us even before we were born, who endured childbirth, and who cared for us when we could not care for ourselves. On this day and on other days cause us to recall the hours they spent and the sacrifices they made so that we could be content and carefree as we grew up.

Lead us to express our thanks and return the love our mothers showed to us.

We cannot thank you enough for mothers and fathers, too, who brought us to Holy Baptism, taught us simple prayers at mealtime, and read us Bible stories at bedtime. Forgive us for resenting their correction and ignoring their guidance as they desired to keep us on the narrow path of life with Christ.

Never let us forget the Christian training they gave to us.

We remember with compassion the mothers who were not always able to reflect your love in our lives. Help us understand the pressures they carried and the sadness they experienced. Take away unhappy memories and rid us of resentment.

Lead us to forgive them as you have forgiven us.

We confess our failures to hold our parents in love. For the naughtiness of childhood, the flare-ups of youth, the overconfidence of adulthood, and for all the words and actions spoken in haste and to hurt, we ask you and our parents for pardon.

Give us courage to make up for past sins when we can.

As their minds and bodies age, help us to support our parents as well as we can. Give us patience to accept their struggles for independence and strength to deal with their weaknesses. Enable us to keep them mindful of Jesus and his promises of a perfect life in heaven.

As they brought us to your Word, so lead us to keep them close to your Word.

Keep in your care all the mothers of our world. Comfort mothers who have been separated from their children. Give strength to mothers who care for children who are sick or troubled. Encourage mothers in societies where mothering is disrespected or discouraged. We pray especially for those who long to be mothers but have not been so blessed.

We pray you to preserve and protect the blessed task of motherhood.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer.

So many women have influenced our lives. Lead us to think about their wisdom, compassion, patience, and encouragement and give us opportunities to say thank you when we can. Help us imitate their care for us as we work and play with children and young adults.

Strengthen us to love others as Jesus loved us. Amen.

PRAYER AND 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.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

“Jerusalem the Golden”

Hymn 889

Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest—
the sight of it refreshes the weary and oppressed.
I know not, oh, I know not what joys await us there,
what radiancy of glory, what bliss beyond compare:
to sing the hymn unending with all the martyr throng,
amidst the halls of Zion resounding full with song.

O sweet and blessed country, the home of God’s elect!
O sweet and blessed country that eager hearts expect,
where they who with their leader have conquered in the fight
forever and forever are clad in robes of white:
in mercy, Jesus, bring us to that dear land of rest
where sings the host of heaven your glorious name to bless.

The Christ is ever with them, the daylight is serene;
the pastures of the blessed are ever rich and green.
There is the throne of David, and there, from care released,
the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast.
To God enthroned in glory the Church’s voices blend,
the Lamb forever blessed, the Light that knows no end.

OFFERING

*If you prefer online giving, you may scan this code
with your mobile device.*



Acknowledgements: Created by Christian Worship: Service Builder © 2023 Texts and music covered under OneLicense.net #A-712373 and CCLI Copyright License 11194382, CCLI Streaming License CSPL059933 Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Divine Service II On Christ’s Ascension I Now Build Text: © 1941 Concordia Publishing House.