

Sermon followed by Service - June 22, 2025 - Acts 2:42-47

How well are you plugged in? The fire department is picky about plug-ins. They don't want to see this kind of extension cord around here; they want to see heavy-duty plug-ins. And they're really not too fired up on this kind of extension cord either; they want to see circuit breakers. They want us to be plugged-in right. Why? They want to keep us safe.

Our sound system consultant is picky about plug-ins, too. He wants everything that plugs in to the sound system to be on a completely separate circuit from our lights and anything else. He wants us to be plugged in right. Why? At home, what happens to your lights when your refrigerator or furnace comes on? Your lights dim. And what happens to the sound on your old alarm clock radio? Snap, crackle, pop. That's why our sound man is picky about plug-ins - he wants pure power to come through.

Our lesson today is about plug-ins and the power of the church. Our lesson shows us what can happen when the church is plugged in right.

You might remember from last week, by the power of his Word and Baptism, God plugged 3000 people into his church in one day. Then what? **“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”** What kind of plugging in do we have there? God's people plugging in to the power of God in word and worship, plugging into the power and peace of Christ in the breaking of bread, the Lord's Supper, God's people plugging in

to God praying for more power and peace. And plugged in to Christ, God granted their prayers.

At the same time, there was another way the people were plugged in. They were plugged in to each other. **“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God.”** The people of God connected as the family of God. They took care of each other as family. They ate together as family. And praising God they encouraged each other and filled each other up with Jesus.

And what happened? The people plugged in to God became a people of peace and power, love and hope. Plugged in with each other God worked that peace and power, that love and hope back and forth, round and round in the church. And that peace and power, that love and hope became like a magnet that drew people in. The people outside the church liked what they saw in the church. They wanted to be plugged in to that same peace and power of Jesus. **“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”**

Now for some self-reflection. Are we giving God the same opportunity to do that for us? Are we devoted to being plugged in to God? Devoted like that early church, getting together to dig into the Bible together, getting together to share the Bible together? If so, why aren't more of us in Bible class and Sunday

school? Are we already so filled with Jesus that he can't do any more for us? Or have we let ourselves get so plugged in to the world that plugging into God's Word just gets put off?

Something else we could ask ourselves is: "are we as picky about our plug-ins as God is?" Jesus said: "**Watch out for false prophets** ... they're dangerous to your faith." Now when Jesus said "**watch out for false teachers**" he wasn't suggesting that false teaching is like sugar and salt and fat; he wasn't just saying "moderation is the key." To make it clear, Jesus had Paul say: "**Stay away from them.**" "Stay away from them" ... don't plug into the church group, the Bible teachers, the youth group that isn't true to the Bible. Don't plug into the "god-friendly" groups out there - the Masons, the Elks, the Scouts - that teach a different god, a Christ-less god, and a Christ-less way to be right with God.

I know that doesn't go over with everyone. Some people say something like this: "It's better for my child to hang out with a false-teaching youth group than to have them hang out with trouble makers." Jesus knows logic better than that; he knows a false either-or proposition when he hears it. He says: "instead of compromising with the false, do the right thing and plug into the truth." That doesn't always go over real big. Given a choice between sacrificing for the truth and plugging in to something popular and successful, what is our culture more likely to choose? The dangerous thing is - that's not just the world's culture, more and more that's the church's culture. More and more people think that a bit of compromise on teaching - a little bit of "whatever" - is what God's people need to face these hard

times. Read Jesus' letters to his church in Revelation. Instead of accepting compromise over truth as good for the church, Jesus shows compromise over truth is one of the devil's ways to curse the church.

So, how well are you plugged in to God? How picky are you about how you plug in to God? When the fire department warns us about extension cords, we might think "yea, yea, yea." When the sound guy tells us he doesn't want the balcony piano and the balcony piano light plugged in to the same outlet, we might think "yea, yea, yea." We can train ourselves to ignore the warnings. But why? Why settle for less than a heavy-duty plug-in with Christ? Why settle for a less-than-pure plug-in with Christ? Why settle when Jesus offers the peace and the power, the hope and the love we see in our lesson? Those people couldn't hear enough of God's Word; they couldn't share enough of God's love.

Why? They loved to hear it, and they loved to share it - "Plugged into Christ, you have Christ's cross to pay for your sin; you are forgiven. Plugged into Christ, you have Christ's holiness as your holiness - you're right by God. Plugged into Christ, you have the eyes and ears of God himself open to you - listening to you, watching out for you. Plugged into Christ, you have the life of Christ; you have heaven as your home. And plugged into Christ, you have the family of God as your family.

What does that get to mean for us? It gives us something to think about. How am I plugging in to Christ? And not just me, how can we help others plug in to God with a heavy-duty

connection to the peace and power of Christ? At the same time, how can we help each other plug in and connect as a family in Christ, sharing the peace and power of Christ?

How? Our lesson gives us part of the answer - When it comes to plugging in with God, don't settle for a plug-in that just gets by. Plug in "heavy-duty" to draw as much power as God will give you. And don't settle for just a God-connection. Be a connector of God's family, let God use you to plug in with the family of God sharing his power and peace. And what will happen? We will all be blessed! Amen.

NEW MORNING PRAISE

"If after Kirk ye bide a wee, There's some would like to speak to ye,
If after Kirk ye rise and flee We all seem cauld and still to ye.
The one that's in the seat with ye Is stranger here than ye, maybe.
All here have got their fears and cares, Add ye your soul unto our prayers
Be ye our angel unawares." --- Scottish Blessing

OPENING HYMN

"God Is Here! As We Your People"

Hymn 858

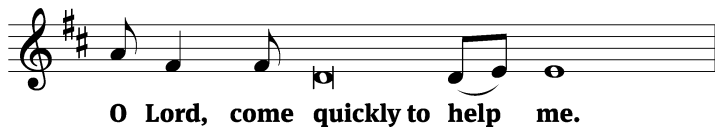
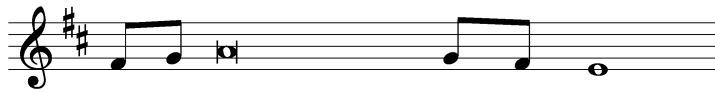
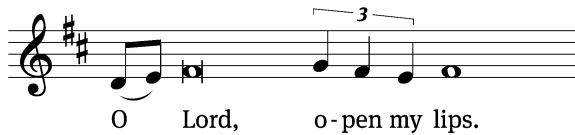
God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer,
may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts
wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace.
Here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place.
Here, in honesty of preaching, here, in silence as in speech,
here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold;
here, as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us as of old.
Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore
what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.

Lord of all, of Church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt,
keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out.
Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive;
we who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

OPENING SENTENCES



CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION OF SINS

- M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.
- C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**
- M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.
- C: **Amen.**



COME, O COME, LET US SING TO THE LORD - SUNG

Refrain

Come, O come, let us sing to the Lord,
let us shout with joy to our saving Rock;
come, enter in with our songs of praise,
come, enter in with thanksgiving.

You are a great and a wondrous God,
cupping in your hands all the depths of earth.
You made the hills and the mountains high,
you made the seas and the dry land. *Refrain*

Come, let us worship and, bowing low,
kneel before the One who has made us all.
You are the God whom we call our own,
we are the flock that you shepherd. *Refrain*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty and merciful God, it is only by your gift of grace that we come into your presence and offer true and faithful service. Grant that our worship on earth may always be pleasing to you, and in the life to come give us the fulfillment of what you have promised; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Acts 2:42-47

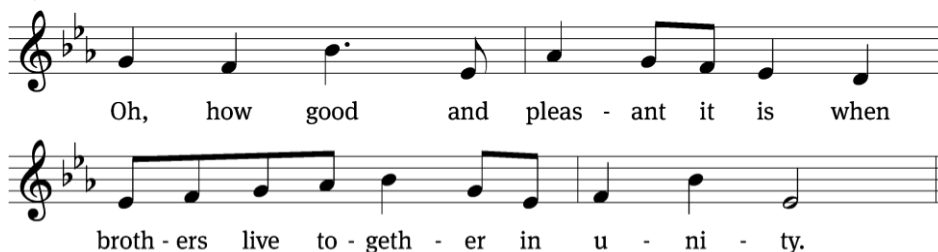
They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

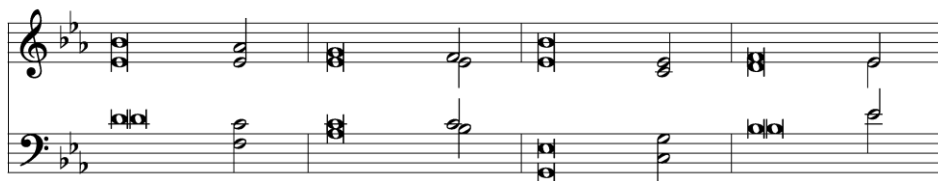
PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 133A

Refrain



Tone



It is as if the dew of / Hermon
were falling on Mount / Zion.

For there the LORD bestows his / blessing,
even life forever- / more.

**Glory be to the Father and to the / Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. A- / men. *Refrain***

SECOND READING

Ephesians 4:1-6

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

"In Unity and Peace"
Hymn 732

Refrain

How good it is and how pleasant to live in unity and peace.
How good it is and how pleasant to live together in one Lord.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, agree in ev'rything you say.
May there be no divisions among you, but be united in one mind.
For there is one Lord, one faith, one God of us all. ***Refrain***

Live a life that is worthy of your call, be humble, gentle, and patient.
Bear with each other in ways that are loving, preserve the unity of faith.
For there is one Lord, one faith, one God of us all. ***Refrain***

Share the love that has joined us as one, unite in spirit and ideals.
Never be rivals, do not be conceited, but look to others in their need.
For there is one Lord, one faith, one God of us all. ***Refrain***

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Hebrews 10:24-25

Alleluia. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

John 13:1–17, 34–35

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

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.

HYMN

“Son of God, Eternal Savior”

Hymn 729

Son of God, eternal Savior, source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us, hallows all our human race,
you our head, who, throned in glory, for your own will ever plead:
fill us with your love and pity, heal our wrongs and help our need.

Bind us all as one together in your Church's sacred fold,
weak and healthy, poor and wealthy, sad and joyful, young and old.
Is there want or pain or sorrow? Make us all the burden share.
Are there spirits crushed and broken? Teach us, Lord, to soothe their care.

As you, Lord, have lived for others, so may we for others live.
Freely have your gifts been granted; freely may your servants give.
Yours the gold and yours the silver, yours the wealth of land and sea;
we but stewards of your bounty held in solemn trust will be.

Son of God, eternal Savior, source of life and truth and grace,
Word made flesh, whose birth among us hallows all our human race,
by your praying, by your willing that your people should be one,
grant, O grant our hope's fruition: here on earth your will be done.

SERMON

Acts 2:42-47

HYMN

"Oh, How Good It Is"
Hymn 731

Oh, how good it is when the fam'ly of God
dwells together in spirit, in faith and unity.
Where the bonds of peace, of acceptance and love
are the fruits of his presence here among us.

Refrain

So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord,
and with one heart we'll live out his word,
till the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come,
for he dwells in the presence of his people.

Oh, how good it is on this journey we share
to rejoice with the happy and weep with those who mourn.
For the weak find strength, the afflicted find grace
when we offer the blessing of belonging. *Refrain*

Oh, how good it is to embrace his command
to prefer one another, forgive as he forgives.
When we live as one we all share in the love
of the Son with the Father and the Spirit. *Refrain*

OFFERING

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HYMN

"We Praise You, O God, Our Redeemer"

Hymn 609 vs. 1, 3

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With you, Lord, beside us, your strong arm will guide us;
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Eternal God and Father, we thank you for the blessings we share as members of your holy Church, for your gracious Word and sacraments, for opportunities to worship and to grow in faith and knowledge, for occasions to serve and be served, and for fellowship with believers in our congregation and our synod.

Help us rejoice in these blessings, dear Lord, and use them faithfully.

Jesus Christ, Lord of the Church, you give grace to your people by calling us to be your witnesses in the world. Open our eyes to see the great and noble mission that lies before us. In the hurting eyes of the lonely, in the pained eyes of the sick, and in the searching eyes of the lost, help us to see your face, Lord Jesus, and to serve others as we would serve you.

Awaken us to opportunities to proclaim your message of love.

Holy Spirit, giver of life, through Word and sacrament bestow on us the wisdom and power we need to witness clearly and to act boldly.

Help us to speak the truth in love, to give the reason for the hope we have, and to conduct ourselves with gentleness and respect.

Set our hearts on fire as we work and witness for Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray for a family member, a neighbor, or a friend who does not believe in you, or whose faith is weak or troubled.

Silent prayer

Keep in your care those who are enduring chronic pain and incessant unhappiness, those enduring rejection and struggling with poverty, those mourning the loss of someone they loved. [Especially bless... *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Bring healing and help and comfort and calm to everyone in distress.

Move us to act alone or join with others to provide help and support.

Bless the Church with men and women who are willing to proclaim your Word in places where we cannot go. Keep them and their loved ones in your care and let nothing hinder their work. By the power of the gospel, restore their spirits each day, so that they do not lose heart as they serve us and others.

Move us to support them with our sincere prayers and generous offerings.

Wherever your Word is proclaimed, O Lord, grant it success. Let your kingdom come to us and others, so that we and many more might join the assembly of saints and angels to sing your praise forever.

Savior of all, hear our prayer and help us in our mission. 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.

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING



The Lord bless and keep you.



A - men.



The Lord's face ev - er shine up - on you.



A - men.



The Lord grant you peace for all your days.



A - men.

CLOSING HYMN

“Go, My Children, with My Blessing”

Hymn 930

Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; you are my own.
In my love’s baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.
Here you learned how much I love you, what I can cure.
Here you heard my dear Son’s story; here you touched him, saw his glory.
Go, my children, sins forgiven, at peace and pure.

Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit’s power filled you; here his tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

I the Lord will bless and keep you and give you peace;
I the Lord will smile upon you and give you peace;
I the Lord will be your Father, Savior, Comforter, and Brother.
Go, my children; I will keep you and give you peace.

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