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Worship At Home
July 11, 2021

GATHERING

GREETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Call to Worship

Pastor: Come, People of God, and let us worship Jesus the Christ.

Reader: Let us worship the eternal God, the Source of love and life, who created us. Let us worship Jesus the Christ, the risen one who lives among us. Let us worship the Spirit, the Holy Fire, who renews us. Let us worship the one true God who is to be praised in all times and places.

Opening Hymn – “Lord You Give the Great Commission”

Greeting

P The peace of the Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P May the risen Christ fill us with life, light, and hope.

*C Thanks be to God. The Spirit teaches us, inspires us, and give us the voice of the Gospel.
Amen.*

Hymn of Praise – “The Lord Has Done Great Things”

THE WORD

First Reading

Amos 7:7-15

This is what he showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand. And the LORD said to me, ‘Amos, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘A plumb-line.’ Then the Lord said,

‘See, I am setting a plumb-line

in the midst of my people Israel;

I will never again pass them by;

the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,

and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,

and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.’

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, 'Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said,
"Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land."'

And Amaziah said to Amos, 'O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.'

Then Amos answered Amaziah, 'I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Psalm 85:8-13

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Psalm Response – "Lord, Let Us See Your Kindness"

Gospel Reading

Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

Response: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

7th Sunday After Pentecost, July 11, 2021. "The Horror of it All."

Josephus, the Roman/Jewish historian of the 1st Century also tells of John the Baptist's death at the hands of Herod. Josephus tells us that John had been in prison about a year before his murder at the hands of Herod at the request of his stepdaughter at the prompting of her mother Herodias.

This is a shocking story that Mark presents us with. It is a story that Mark uses to let us know what Jesus will be up against very soon. It is a story of the misuse of power to silence—or attempt to silence the prophets of God. It is a story that will mirror in many ways the arrest and the trial and the execution of Jesus.

Following the death of John, the Baptist, Jesus expands His ministry into Judea and finishes calling the 12. So, what else does this horror story tell us about what will be taking place with Jesus when He gets to Jerusalem that last time.

Note: the similarity between Pilate and Herod: Both wish to release John and Jesus but cannot because of politics and fear. Both John and Jesus are unjustly condemned. However, Herod fears both Herodias and those who follow John. Herod fears God, because he knows that John is a Holy Man of God, and that Jesus seems to be even more beloved by the crowd than John.

But there is one stark difference between John's and Jesus's trial and execution: here, Herod is bested by his wife who wants John dead for challenging her marriage to the king. And Pilate's wife warns Pilate against bringing harm to Jesus. Pilate doesn't listen because of his fear of the mob and the emperor should riots break out—again.

So, what else is Mark trying to tell us in this story?

I believe that part of the answer is that no matter how fierce darkness and evil seem as though they can and will silence the Word of God, God will not allow that to happen. Each time when it seems that darkness and evil have carried the day, the Word of God continues to thrive. When John dies, Jesus picks up His ministry of bringing the Kingdom of God near to all of God's people. When Jesus is executed, the Holy Spirit comes to embolden the disciples to proclaim the Gospel of the Risen Christ to all peoples. And each time the Body of Christ has been threaten with persecution, with horror beyond description, the Church—the Body of Christ has survived and grown.

And for us, this story reminds us that no matter how dark our lives may become, no matter how far we feel from God, God will always be there for us. God will not abandon us to the dark or to temptation. Thus, when we have the opportunity to share our story of faith, we can say with certainty, that our God, is God who stands with us as God has stood with His people forever. Amen.

Hymn of the Day - "Here I Am, Lord"

Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God has established the Church, and will preserve and protect it, and will provide us with a foretaste of our greatest hope.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the church and died and rose again in His resurrection, to give eternal life through our baptism into Christ.

We believe that the Holy Spirit breathed fire and life into the Church at Pentecost and still provides power for its preservation and ministry.

We believe the Church is the community of disciples, using their gifts freely and wisely for the common good of the body and to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ until He comes again. Amen.

Prayers of the People

P. As we are rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the Church, the World, and all of Creation.

(A Brief Silence)

P. In these days of conflict and lack of trust among peoples, we pray for the people of Israel and Gaza, that their leaders will find peace and hope, so that their people may live without fear once more. Indeed, Lord, we pray for all peoples who are enduring conflict that soon peace will come. Hear us O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord, you draw near to these who cry out for help. Enable us to be your hands that feed the hungry; to those who are in darkness and are looking for hope; let us be your arms to those who are mourning the death of loved ones; let us be your comfort to those who are ill of body mind or spirit, and enable us to bring your light and your hope who are searching for light and hope in their lives. Be especially with those for whom we pray on our prayer list, and those for whom we pray in this moment of silence.....Hear us O God.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. On this day Lord, we would pray for all those who serve our town and cities to keep us safe, and pray for their safety this day. We pray for those who serve us in far off places, that they will be able to return to their loved ones soon.

C. Your mercy is great.

P. Lord we here at Bethany would ask that your Spirit guide the search for a new pastor for your people here. Bless our Call Committee with the spirit of discernment as they examine those who believe that God is calling to a new congregation in Scottsdale, AZ Hear us O God.

P. We lift these and all of our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Offering

Offertory

Prayer of Blessing

P Let us pray:

C. Gracious God, we give our best, lest in gaining the world we lose life itself. As a covenant people, we seek to witness to your will and way. Help us to know more clearly what you would have us do with the gifts entrusted to our care. Direct us according to your will O God. Amen.

MEAL

A Brief Confession

P. Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sins and hear again, Christ's words of forgiveness.

A brief silence

C. Too often Lord, we question your ways when they differ from the ways of the world in which we live. We turn instead to our own understanding rather than trusting in You. We take offense at your teachings and your ways. Turn us again Lord, to you. Where else can we turn? Enable us Lord to help to hear your words for us and to enable us to be light and life for our world. Lord we confess that we have not always lived up to the covenant that you have made with us, and we ask for your forgiveness. Amen.

P. Beloved People of God, through Jesus the bread of life, the light of the World, you are forgiven all of your sins, and you are loved into the life with Christ.

All: Amen.

P. The love of Christ has gathered us as one, to remember Christ, the Son of God, who loved his own until the end.

C. In His great, unselfish love, the Lord who calmed the storms and turned water into wine, stooped to a servant's duty and washed his disciples' feet.

P. When we are gathered here, let us be drawn together by His passion. Let no love be less than His.

C. Let us follow Christ's example and serve one another as He first served us. For by this, the world will know that we are Christ's followers, if we love one another.

P. On the night He was betrayed....

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.**

Communion Invitation

P: Come to God's table; be fed and satisfied.

C: We come to feed our spirit and be in the presence of God.

Communion Music - "Go into the World"

Kristan

Communion Blessing

P. Let us pray:

C. Jesus, Bread of Life, we have received from your table more than we could ever ask. As you have nourished us in this meal, now strengthen us to love the world with your own life. In your name we pray. Amen.

SENDING

Benediction

Pastor: May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ fill you with every good blessing. Amen.

Closing Hymn – “City of God”

Dismissal

Paster: Go in Peace...to live and serve in the way of the cross.

Response: Thanks be to God.