

“Whatchya doin?” My youngest nephew - when he was about yea-high - had a habit of walking off from mom and dad, walking up to complete strangers: “Whatchya doin?” What’s the cutest, sweetest, neatest thing you’ve heard a three-year-old say? Kids can say the best things. But our downstairs teachers tell me that when a preschooler has older brothers or sisters, some of the things that come out of those young mouths aren’t so cute and sweet. Even more so, I think we’ve all seen a red-faced mom or dad scolding their child for something they said, mom and dad with hands up, trying to defend themselves: “I don’t know where they learned such a thing.” And everyone around smirks and thinks: “Yea, right. We know where your child learned that potty-mouth; we hear those words from you, your music, and your TV.” Kids can say the cutest things, things that warm the heart and make mom and dad proud, and kids can say the most embarrassing things.

What we hear in our lesson today could be both. Ahab and Jezebel are dead; Elijah is up in heaven; Elisha is God’s prophet. And Elisha has been working miracles - saving armies, giving victory on the battlefield; giving a childless couple their first child, then, after what seems to be a burst aneurysm, raising that child from the dead; turning food for 20 into food for a hundred; and so many more amazing miracles. But not all was good in Israel. Ahab’s son was king; he wasn’t as evil as his father, but he sure wasn’t leading his people to the LORD. So God was using the Arameans to apply some pressure. The Arameans were what we might call Syrians, and the Arameans and Israelites got along about as well as Syrians and Israelis do today.

Here and now, we have troublemakers breaking into cars. Israel had bands of raiders, military raiding parties, crossing the border from Syria taking whatever and whoever they could. One of Aram’s raiding parties took a young girl, took her captive, took her back north across the border to Aram where she was made to serve the wife of the army commander of the king.

I wonder how old she was. Was she Mia’s age? Abigail and Isla’s age? Grace and Audrey’s age? Maybe Amelia’s age? Try to put yourself in the place of this young

girl. You're so big, and soldiers bully their way, they force their way past mom and dad. They tear you away from mom and dad. Did they tie up your hands? Did they chain your legs? Did they chain you up one to another? They force you to leave your home, your neighborhood, north to a place you've never seen with people you've never seen. You have trouble understanding what they're saying. You don't know what they're doing, what they're going to do with you. When they get you to where they're going, they force you to do chores, not for the family you love, but for some woman married to the enemy, married to the guy responsible for ripping you from your family and ruining your life. As you do your chores, as you try to sleep at night, what's going through your mind? Worry, fear - what are they going to do to me? What's going to happen to me? Loneliness - will I ever see my family again? Hopelessness - I'm never going to get out of here? With all that, what's going through your mind? Anger, hate -

Now you hear the man responsible for your fear, your worry, your loneliness, your hopelessness, your hurt, your heartbreak, your anger, your hate - he has leprosy. How do you feel about that?

Listen to what the young girl in our lesson said: **"If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."** I don't know which is more amazing - her faith or her love. Listen to her faith - Elisha can cure him. No, Elisha would cure him. Listen to her love - **"If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria."** Which do you see as more amazing? Her faith that Elisha could and would heal him? Or her love - more powerful than her fear, more powerful than her hurt, more powerful than her anger, she wanted the man responsible for her fear, her hurt, her misery to be cured!

How could she have such love? How could she have such faith? She had to have heard about Elisha; she had to have heard about the LORD from somewhere, didn't she? From where? From whom? I'm thinking her parents, maybe her grandparents. In a world that was rejecting God to do their own thing, this young girl had someone in her life who wasn't following the ways of the world, but was looking to the LORD. She had someone in her life who wasn't so busy with the world that they only had time for the world so that she got swept along with the world. She had someone in her life pointing

her, leading her, telling and teaching her about the LORD. And not just in passing. They planted this seed so well it didn't get blown away by the trouble in her life; it didn't get buried by all the hurt and heartache she was going through. This young girl knew what Elisha and the LORD had done; she knew what Elisha and the LORD could do.

And she wanted that for the man responsible for her hurt and heartache. Why? We could go Stockholm and blame her love on a weak mind. Or we can figure that the Spirit of Christ who inspired this history to be in the Bible, that the Spirit of Christ had something to do with inspiring this young girl. Before Jesus taught us to pray: **"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us,"** this young girl was living the Lord's Prayer. Before Paul wrote: **"If God is for us, who can be against us?!"** Before Paul wrote: **"You know that in all things God is working for the good of those who love him."** Before Paul wrote: **"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse."** Before Paul wrote: **"Do not repay anyone evil for evil."** Before Paul wrote: **"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."** Before Paul wrote any of those words, this young girl was living those words.

How could she? She knew what Elisha had been doing with the LORD - turning trouble to good. In impossible ways and impossible places, Elisha and the LORD had been turning trouble to good. And she was blessed to know it because someone loved her enough to make sure she knew it. Because someone told her, she knew Elisha's LORD and her LORD. Even if she didn't know the words of David, she knew the peace of David: **"The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. ... The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him."** Even if she didn't know the words of David, she knew the peace of David: **"The cords of death entangled me; the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me. ... In my distress I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help. From his temple he heard my voice He reached down from on high and took hold of me He rescued me from my**

powerful enemy, from my foes, who were too strong for me. ... He brought me out into a spacious place; he rescued me because he delighted in me.” Even if she didn’t know the words of David, she knew the peace of David: **“The LORD is my Shepherd... Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. ... Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD.”** I don’t know if this young girl knew all those words, but she knew her LORD. She knew her LORD because someone told her, taught her, and showed her her LORD.

And so where my heart might well be filled with fear and worry, loneliness and hopelessness, anger and hurt, the heart of this little girl was filled with the peace and love of the LORD, ready to share the peace and love of the LORD.

Dare I say that we know her LORD even better than she did? We know the love of our LORD in Jesus and his cross. We know the saving power of our LORD with Easter. In the cross, we know how Jesus went through hurt and heartbreak to forgive us. We know how Jesus was willing to forgive even his enemies: “Father, forgive them.” With Easter, we know the power of Jesus to undo evil, to undo death. We know the love and power of Jesus to save - to save us, to save our family and friends, to save even those who have hurt us. We know because someone told us. Whom will we tell? Amen.

July 29 & 30, 2023

DIVINE SERVICE I

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we are surrounded by broken hearts who don't know where to turn for the help they so desperately need (whether they realize it or not).

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we are encouraged by the voice of a little girl to forget our hurts and to share our help.

OPENING HYMN

"Good News of God Above"

Hymn 905

Good news of God above is ours to tell abroad,
the Father's everlasting love in Christ the risen Lord.
For neighbors near and far the seed of life is sown;
then spread the seed by word and deed to make the Savior known.

The love of Christ proclaim, who left his home on high;
to live our human life he came, our human death to die.
The Father's only Son became the sinners' friend,
our lot to share, our sin to bear, and death's dominion end.

The Lord of glory lives! From cross and death and grave
his own abundant life he gives to those he died to save.
His righteousness and peace declare from sea to sea;
his praises sound the world around for Christ has made us free.

Hear now the Master's word to those who bear his name:
"So send I you," till all have heard, "make known, declare, proclaim!"
Go forth in all the earth; embrace the path he trod
with Christ beside as friend and guide to bring good news of God.

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.
- C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.
- M: God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (+) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Glory to God *Glory in Excelsis (Sung)*

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory!
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God,
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; Have mercy on us.
You are seated at the right hand of the Father;
receive our prayer, Receive our prayer.
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
For you alone are the Holy one, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father.
Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Glory to God, glory to God!

Prayer of the Day

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, keep us ever mindful of the fields ripe for harvest here and throughout the world. Give our members a deep passion for the welfare of others and great courage to witness your lifesaving truth to friends, family members, and coworkers. Establish gospel outreach as an immovable pillar of our congregation's ministry. Make us eager to invest our talents and offerings in evangelism efforts so that many more may be won for your kingdom through faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior of all people. **Amen.**

First Reading

2 Kings 5:1–3

Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.

Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

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

Refrain



Let the peo-ple praise you, O God, let all the peo - ple praise you.

Tone



May God be gracious to us and / bless us
 and make his face / shine on us—
 so that your ways may be / known on earth,
 your salvation among all / nations.
 May the peoples / praise you, God;
 may all the peoples / praise you.
 May the nations be glad and / sing for joy,
 for you rule the peoples with equity and guide the nations / of the earth. *Refrain*

Tone



The land yields its / harvest;
 God, our God, / blesses us.
 May God / bless us still,
 so that all the ends of the earth will / fear him.
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. / Amen.

Refrain
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Let the peo-ple praise you, O God, let all the peo - ple praise you.

SECOND READING

1 Peter 3:8–18a

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For,

“Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.
They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.
For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

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

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Acts 8:4

Alleluia. Those who had been scattered preached the Word wherever they went. Alleluia.

John 15:15–21; 16:33

The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”

When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?”

They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”), “where are you staying?”

“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.”

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

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

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY

"I Hear the Savior Calling"

Hymn 743

I hear the Savior calling! The gospel comes to me;
my eyes, once closed in blindness, are opened now to see
that I myself was helpless to live eternally,
but, dying, Christ did save me, and now he calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He leads a soul to me,
a soul in bitter anguish, one needing to be free.
The gift I have to offer is Christ, my Lord's decree
that all have been forgiven; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He gives this charge to me:
to serve the best I'm able, whate'er the call may be.
Thus hand in hand with others who share the gospel key
we spread the gospel tidings; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! He changes hearts for me;
from door to door I witness to share my Savior's plea.
Yet nothing can be added, no word on bended knee,
beyond the simple gospel; my Savior calls for me!

I hear the Savior calling! His call has urgency;
each moment souls are dying, soon comes eternity.
And so, my precious Savior, this is my humble plea:
prepare me for my mission, for you are calling me!

Sermon

Create In Me (Sung)

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold, uphold me with your free Spirit.

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Father in heaven, you sent your Son, our Lord Jesus, to bring peace and hope to our fallen world. Already in eternity you planned to overturn the tyranny of Satan and the ravages of sin and you kept your promises to restore the perfection of paradise.

Lead us to cherish your great mercy and hold to it as our priceless treasure.

Lord Jesus, Lamb of God, we praise and adore you for offering your perfect life and innocent death to redeem the world from death and hell. You proclaimed the good news that sins are forgiven and life with God is restored and you called your followers to share the gospel with all people

Make us bold and confident to be witnesses to family and friends we know and love.

Holy Spirit, Lord, and giver of life, through Word and sacrament you create and strengthen faith that trusts the promise of the Father and the work of his Son. You break down the barriers of resistance and rejection and bring the lost into the family of God.

Empower and encourage us to speak about Jesus to neighbors and acquaintances.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, move us by your great love to enter the mission fields near our homes and neighborhoods. Help us always to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have.

Guide us, strengthen us, and bless us as we share the love of Jesus. Amen.

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.**

The Sacrament

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)

(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do.

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock till he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (SUNG)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power, God of might:
heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (+) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (+) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **Amen.**

O Christ, Lamb of God (Sung)

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Have mercy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
Grant us your peace. Amen. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

"On Galilee's High Mountain" Hymn 742

On Galilee's high mountain Christ gave the great command
in words of strength and promise which all can understand:
"All pow'r to me is given to do what I shall choose;
therefore I send my children, their witness I will use."

The Lord, who, born of Mary, came down as man and died,
who preached to all who listened, for us was crucified.

This Lord, our living brother, in pow'r at God's right hand
has chosen us to carry his truth to ev'ry land.

His strength within my weakness will make me bold to say
how his redeeming power transforms my stubborn clay.
His touch of fire ignites me, with courage I am sent,
my tongue-tied silence broken, with grace made eloquent.

And not alone to nations in faraway retreats,
but ev'rywhere I broadcast his love through crowded streets.
The lives that my life touches, however great or small—
let them through me see Jesus, who served and saved us all.

Lord, gather all your children, wherever they may be,
and lead them on to heaven to live eternally
with you, our loving Father, and Christ, our brother dear,
whose Spirit guards and gives us the joy to persevere.

CLOSING PRAYER

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
and his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this Holy Supper. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

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

"I Love to Tell the Story"

Hymn 746 vs. 1, 7, & 3

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do.
I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

The Savior of all people has brought his peace to you;
now go and tell the story, for others need it too.

To ev'ry land and nation ring out the gospel call;
proclaim that Christ is risen and grants his peace to all.
I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when in scenes of glory I sing the new, new song,
'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.
I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

OFFERING

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Ukrainian churches connect through the crisis

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues, pastors and members of the Ukrainian Lutheran Church (ULC) continue to gather for worship and find ways to assist and reach out to their communities.

The Holy Spirit has blessed the efforts of the ULC, which has not only provided physical aid to people in need but also the comforting balm of Christ's gospel message.

The congregation in Ivanivka was able to hold a vacation Bible school this summer. About 25 students from four different villages attended to learn about Jesus' love as well as enjoy music, crafts, and singing.

In June, Resurrection Lutheran Church in Kyiv welcomed more than 60 people into the family of believers, three through Baptism and 57 through confirmation. Bishop Horpynchuk has been guiding more than 70 refugees and visitors in the study of God's Word using the catechism. After finishing the course, the people who wished to become members confessed their faith in the Lord, joining in fellowship with the local congregation, the ULC, and all the members of the [Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference](#).

In just one example of the aid being provided, the church in Kiev is helping a family of five who lost their husband/father in the war. He was the family provider, so the congregation is providing the family food, medicine, and other daily necessities.

In a correspondence with Rev. Roger Neumann, the WELS liaison with Ukraine, Horpynchuk said, "Please continue to keep us in your prayers as we continue with catechism [instruction] and new people enrolled in the catechism class. The Lord is good and faithful; his Word never returns empty. Thank you to all the brothers and sisters in WELS who support us so faithfully in our most difficult times of this war!"