

HYMNS: 904, 839, 836, 701, 630, 842.

INTROIT: - PSALM 123,

P I have been lifting up my eyes to You,

C **O You who are enthroned in heaven.**

P Indeed, as the eyes of servants look to the hands of their masters, as the eyes of a maidservant look to the hand of her mistress,

C **so our eyes look to the LORD, our God, until He shows favour to us.**

P Show favour to us, O LORD, show favour to us!

C **For we have had more than enough contempt.**

All **Our souls have had more than enough derision from those who are at ease, and derision from those who are proud.**

COLLECT: O God, Your almighty power is made known chiefly in showing mercy. Grant the fullness of Your grace that we may be called to repentance and be made partakers of Your heavenly treasures; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READINGS: Old Testament, Ezekiel 2:1-5.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10.

Gospel: Mark 6:1-13.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, Amen.

The text for our sermon for this Sunday is written in the book of Mark 6:1-6, which was our gospel reading before

¹ Then Jesus went away from there and came to His hometown, and His disciples followed Him. ² When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard Him were amazed. They asked, "Where did this Man get these things? What is this wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters also here with us?"

So they took offence at Him.

⁴ However, Jesus began to tell them, "A prophet is not without honour, except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his family."

⁵ He could not perform any miracle there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ He was amazed at their unbelief. Then He went all around in the villages, and taught.

Lord God heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. **AMEN**

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

You've heard it said that familiarity breeds contempt, that the better we know someone, the more likely we are to find fault with them. And that's what happened in the synagogue that day. Jesus had done mighty things and spoken mighty words, and word of Him had gotten back to His own country. And as He taught in the synagogue that day the people who heard Him were astonished. **"Where did this Man get these things?"** they said. **"And "What is the wisdom given to Him, that His hands are doing such miracles? ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters also here with us?"** So they took offence at Him.

Their familiarity with Jesus led to contempt for Him, and this was their problem. They thought they knew Jesus. They'd seen Him grow from a small boy, through His teenage years into manhood. They knew Mary, His mother, and His brothers and sisters. They thought of Him as being no different from themselves and certainly no better. So how is it that He speaks about the things of God as though He is an authority? From where did He receive such wisdom? And how could He possibly do such great acts? They were offended because, they saw Jesus as an ordinary man and no more. Their familiarity bred contempt.

Though the world might proclaim Jesus to be an ordinary man, He is anything but ordinary. Because Jesus is God-with-us in the flesh. He casts out illness and demons with a word. He commands nature and it obeys. He raised the dead by a word, and He will raise us from the dead as well. He is true God, and He is true man. Yet, by outward appearances He seemed ordinary. And later on, having convinced many that He was the promised Messiah, He died on a cross. He was crucified as an ordinary criminal. What an offense that was to see Jesus hanging on that cross, wearing a crown of thorns. This - what they so called an ordinary man - is our Saviour from sin and death. But looks are deceiving, for as Jesus hung dying on that cross, He was saving the people of the world from their sins. Jesus looked like any other man dying, but when He died the curtain in the temple was torn in two. Man is no longer separated from God by sin, because Jesus has taken them all away.

And here's where familiarity breeds contempt fails to hold. You see Christ Jesus is intimately familiar with us. He knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows our every weakness, our every sin. You see, His familiarity with us, doesn't lead to contempt, but to the cross. In His unending love for us He laid down His life for us that we might live with Him forever. Imagine that! He knows us so well, and He still wants us to live with Him forever.

But we are all too often like those who were offended at Jesus that day, because we too are often offended at the ordinary. For example, we may see the water in the baptismal font as simply water, from the tap into the jug and then from the jug into the font. It looks like ordinary water, nothing special. But Jesus says that, "that water - kills and makes alive as the Old Adam is drowned and a new man comes forth." For together with God's Word - that water is a life-giving flood as we are buried with Christ and raised with Him to a new life.

Or we may consider the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper to be nothing special. It looks so ordinary. But when taken from the altar and given into the mouths of repentant sinners, that bread and wine are the true Body and Blood of Jesus. That bread and wine forgives sins! They bestow eternal life! And it happens because God says it happens. The Word of God joins the Body and Blood of Christ to that bread and wine making it a divine meal unto salvation

Or even consider Holy Absolution. The pastor appears no different from you. He is every bit a sinner as you are. Yet, He has been called by God to do something extraordinary, forgive sins. When He speaks those words, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, he is speaking for the One whose death earned that forgiveness for you, the words aren't the pastors, but are Christ's, and they do what they say, Yes, my friends, Jesus has come to be with us too. We are His brothers and sisters by virtue of our Baptism. Yet, such familiarity in us may breed contempt even as it did for those in Nazareth. But Jesus' familiarity with us, will never have contempt for us. You see their unbelief, their refusal to see who Jesus really is, prevented them from receiving the fullness of the gifts that Jesus had come to bring to them. We're told, **He could not perform any miracle there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.**

So you see, Jesus doesn't force Himself on anyone. He doesn't force anyone to believe in Him. Rather, "**He came to give His life a ransom for many**". (Matt. 20:28). And this too is offensive to some people, because they don't want everyone to be saved, or they are offended by God's Law. They are offended to hear that they are sinners deserving nothing but an eternity in hell. But if someone doesn't realize that they are held hostage by sin, death and the devil, they have no use for the ransom that Jesus paid. If a person doesn't realize their need for forgiveness, they will have no use for the means by which our Lord bestows forgiveness. If a person doesn't realize that they are sick, then they have no use for the Great Physician who seeks to heal them of all their diseases, especially their disease of sin.

And yet, if by God's grace they do realize their great need, there is but one Saviour, - our Lord Jesus Christ. For while He could lay His hands on only a few sick people and heal them in Nazareth, the unbelief of the people did not prevent Him from going around to the other villages and preaching to them. The unbelief of the Nazarenes prevented them from receiving Jesus and His gifts of forgiveness life and salvation, but it didn't keep Jesus from

His saving work. Instead, Jesus kept proclaiming the kingdom of God, and repentance and forgiveness to all. He didn't let the unbelief of His hometown keep Him from the cross on which He died for the sin of the world, including those of the Nazarenes, and including ours

The same Jesus who died for our salvation also sits beside us here this morning. The same Jesus who listened to the repentant thief on the cross listens to our words of repentance. The same Jesus who forgave the unbelief of His disciples also forgives us. The same Jesus who heard the plea for mercy from a man named Jairus to come and heal his daughter also hears our pleas. The same Jesus who gave Himself to His disciples in the upper room as food and drink gives Himself to us in the same way here today at this altar.

And finally the salvation that was poured out from the cross, in the water and blood that flowed from Jesus' side that salvation flows over us. You and I have been included in the promise of God. God holds us in His loving arms and not in contempt. You and I are not forgotten. You and I have been forgiven. You and I have been given a new life. You and I have been freed from our sins. God grant to us that we never be offended by Jesus or hold Him in contempt, but rather that we believe in Him and His saving work for us, now and forever. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. **AMEN**

3rd Hymn: 836,

Prayer of the Church 7th Pentecost 2018.

P Let us pray for the Church and all peoples.

Brief Silence.

P Almighty and everlasting God, whose ascended Son now reigns over all the nations, by Your Gospel message pour out Your Holy Spirit upon the Church. Grant Your Holy Spirit so that Your people will receive the power to share Your salvation with unbelievers. Give zeal and passion to the hearts of all those who, in faith, trust in Your Son as Saviour so that they may proclaim, by their loving words and deeds, the mercy God has demonstrated to them through Jesus. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P O Lord, guide all congregations as they engage in faithfully calling people to repentance. Keep them faithful in their proclamation of Your Word, even when confronted with the stubborn and hard-hearted who refuse to hear Your message. Bless their proclamation so many will receive Your forgiveness. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Ruler of the nations, we thank You for this nation and for the freedoms we enjoy as its citizens. Keep our nation under Your protective care. Give wisdom to all who make, administer, and judge our laws. Bless all public servants as they attempt to provide a stable and safe society. Give them courage to promote a peaceful society by respecting our freedom to worship You and by respecting the sanctity of life as they enact legislation which cares for the unborn the elderly and the unemployed and underemployed. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Heavenly Father, our fragile bodies testify to the fact that we live in the midst of so many weaknesses. Give patience and trust to those whose specific medical and physical limitations constantly remind them that they live with such weakness. We especially pray for those who are sick and suffering in any way [especially those whom we name before You in our hearts and their families]. Grant them patience in their afflictions with the strength of Christ's love, until You grant them deliverance, peace, and health. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P God of Life, bless all our pastors and their families, Bless Your Church and this congregation, those that are in nursing homes, and that You would give them with unity of heart, mind, and witness, that nothing may hinder the work You have called us to do. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Lord Jesus, in the fellowship of this altar, we come and taste Your goodness as You give us Your body and blood to eat and drink under simple bread and wine. Let us not take this sacred meal for granted, strengthen our faith in the wondrous things You've done for our salvation, and increase in us Christian charity towards our neighbours. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P These things and whatever else You know we need, grant us, dear Father in Heaven, for the sake of Your only Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

4th Hymn:701.