

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
DAILY WALKING WITH CHRIST - WEEK 5
Pastor Christian Magnell, Pastor John R. Hanson
April 28, 2024, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Julie Hanson, Musician

COMMON THREAD *I used to plug my headphones into my microphone port and wonder why I could not hear anything. It seems simple enough: if I am not plugged in or am not properly plugged in, I will not hear. If we are not plugged into Christ, if we are not abiding in him, we will not hear. Worse, we will not understand. Nor will we worship and receive his blessings. But if we abide in him, his words will abide in us; they will resonate and be understandable and we will bear the fruit of his love.*

THEME AND VERSE

Lord God, so often we want to run away and do things our way in our time. But apart from you, we can do nothing. Help us to re-focus all that we are, all that we do, and all that we say. Take the focus off the busyness of our lives and the things we think we want, and re-focus us on you and your word!
“Abide in me, and I in you.” John 15:4

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

CELEBRATION SINGERS

“Thy Word”

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: John 15:1-8

Cut a branch from a vine, bush, or tree and within a day, the results are obvious. The leaves wither and brown, the wood dries out, and soon enough it is fit for one thing: the fire. We must stay attached to the source of life. Otherwise, we too will wither and die and be fit only for eternal fire. Staying attached to the vine, abiding in Christ, means that his words live in us. The Church is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone” (Eph 2:20). Pull out the Word of God or the word of God about Christ and the building collapses and gives no shelter. Pull away the branch from the vine, and the branch dies and bears no fruit. Glorifying God by bearing fruit depends upon abiding in Christ the Vine.

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever

abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in me, he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of

the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Let us go to God with our brokenness,

Lord God, we stand before you today in need of healing. We have sinned against you, and we've sinned against the ones around us. We think we understand how to live, and then we go out and make a mess of things. Your word tells us we should abide in Christ, but we run so quickly away from him. Why is it that we can't get it right, once and for all? We confess that just when we think we've figured things out, we chase after all the wrong things. Forgive us for the things we've done and for the things we've neglected to do.

Remember: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God, in his faithfulness and justice, has forgiven you and made you new!

Amen!

HYMN

"Shine, Jesus, Shine"

Blue # 651

***Shine, Jesus shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light! (refrain)***

Lord, the light of your love is shining, in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us, set us free by the truth you now bring us.

Shine on me, shine on me:

As we gaze on your kingly brightness, so our faces display your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory, mirrored here may our lives tell your story.

Shine on me, shine on me:

CCLI Song # 30426 CCLI License # 1713417

SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM (10:30)

WELCOME / SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

READING: Acts 8:26-40 *Here is the question we should ask of every visitor to our churches: "Do you understand?" Do they believe what they heard and read and sang during the service of worship? What sort of difference might it make if folks who came back were engaged in this way? If an interest in understanding exists, perhaps you could be their guide. If they say they understand, ask a few questions. This is an obvious way to continue preaching the gospel outside of the sanctuary.*

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a

desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,

who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he opens not his mouth.

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"[38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

SECOND READING: 1 John 4:1-11 There are things we should be doing like looking after the needs of the Body of Christ and feeding the poor. We fail in these duties sometimes and feel guilty. That feeling can motivate us toward putting our faith into action, but it ought not cause us to feel condemned. God's grace is greater than our feelings. We may have absolute confidence before God even when we neglect our duty. Though we sometimes fail to keep his commands, we do not fail him altogether. We continue to believe in spite of ourselves. For we do not believe in our good works or our bad ones but in God's Son, Jesus Christ. It is not enough to love your neighbor as yourself — we must keep loving God. When you sense the law accusing you, remember the first two commandments: keep loving the Lord and then try again to love your neighbor, even if it means laying down your life.

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. 4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore, they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to

us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

HYMN

“Lord, I lift Your Name on High”

Lord, I lift your name on high. Lord, I love to sing your praises.
I'm so glad you're in my life. I'm so glad you came to save us.

*You came from heaven to earth, to show the way,
From the earth to the cross my debt to pay.
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky,
Lord, I lift your name on high.*

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SERMON – “How Do You Understand?”

HYMN

“Take My Life, That I May Be”

Green # 406

Take my life, that I may be consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING PRAYER / WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Life-giving God, through the blessed gift and sacrament of Holy Communion, you abide in us even as we abide in you. Through this holy and mutual abiding, you give us life in Christ and strengthen and nurture our faith just as a vine gives life to its branches. Help us to grow in Christ so that we may be sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Amen.

Jesus is the vine. Abide in him today, tonight, and throughout your week. Let him work through you to bless and encourage this world!

Thanks be to God!

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*Listening for the Promise, Fifth Sunday of Easter — April 28, 2024 —
“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” 1 John 4:11*

Love is a gift from God; without him, it is impossible for us to love. We love because God first loved us, and God calls us through his love to love others. Sure, nonbelievers love. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, love is strong affection for another arising out of kinship or personal ties; attraction based on sexual desire; affection based on admiration, benevolence, or common interests. All human beings are capable of love.

There's another definition of love, a more difficult kind of love. It is the unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for the good of another: as the fatherly concern of God for humankind or brotherly concern for others. It is especially difficult to love strangers and enemies. How do we do love those who do not love us back? We look to God. He loved us so much that He gave up His own Son. Now, He calls us to this sacrificial love. This love is impossible without God.

John writes, “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Jesus, the Son of God, suffered the humiliation of the cross, quietly died for our sake, paying the price for our sin. This is the Gospel message: that God so loved us that He sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

Love is sacrificing oneself for the sake of another; hate is sacrificing another for our own sake. If we think so highly of ourselves that we can ignore or reject the cries of our brothers and sisters, it is impossible for us to love God. God comes to us in and through the needs of others. We have the opportunity to love God by offering a drink to those who thirst. We love God by sharing our lunch with those who are hungry. The sick, imprisoned, unclothed, and homeless provide more opportunities for us to love God. We love God when we love them with our whole selves, our resources, and our actions. God's love is not meant to be kept to ourselves, hidden from the world. He loved us with the most sacrificial love there is so that we will love our neighbors with unselfish, loyal, and benevolent concern for their own good.