

## JULY 18, 2021; EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**PRELUDE:** Carol Gustafson; Singers: Fugleberg

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** *Psalm 23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

**HYMN #150 (AH) "Let All Things Now Living" 9 am: (OVH) # "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"**

**OPENING PRAYER:** *Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen*

**PRAYER**

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE: Baby Bible**

**FIRST LESSON:** *Jeremiah 23:1-6 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2 Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD. 3 "I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4 I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD. 5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. 6 In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Mark 6:30-44 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. 35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" 38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five-and two fish." 39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they*

*sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.*

**READER: Here ends the reading of God's Word.**

**CONGREGATION SINGS: God be praised, for His glad Tidings!**

**CONFESSION OF FAITH:** I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And 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, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall 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

**GLORIA PATRI:** *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is not, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

**SOLO: David Reynolds accompanied by Ray Holmberg**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & EMMI'S PROJECT & GIDEON BIBLE PRESENTATION**

**PRAISE SONGS: 1 or 2** praise songs chosen by CAROL

### **DEEP PEACE AND REJUVENATING REST**

Ephesians 2:11-22; Mark 6:31&32; Pastor Tom Olson; July 18, 2021

**CAMPING:** The theme verses of our Association Retreat Center in Wisconsin is *Mark 6:31&32 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." 32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

I have wonderful memories of camping with friends. They had a camper for Mom, Dad and three girls and I brought my little pup tent and slept there. Bible Camp was a special time, often by a beautiful lake, like Lake Koronis in Painsville, MN where I attended Lutheran Evangelistic Movement family camp for a number of years. I still love to go to even one day of Bible camp and walk around watching the children play...and throw a few horseshoes myself. These are rejuvenating times for body and soul. Family Camp at the Association Retreat Center is the first week in August and I would guess there still are rooms available. I speak there on Wednesday morning.

**BALANCE:** Jesus wanted his disciples to have a balanced life. When the ministry got too heavy for them, he would take them away to a solitary place for rest. Most of us were raised to be hard workers and we sometimes don't feel it is right to come apart and rest. But we find out that if we don't work to keep DEEP PEACE AND REJUVENATING REST as part of the rhythm of our lives, we eventually pay a high price in body and soul. We continue our journey through the book of Ephesians in chapter two under the theme: DEEP PEACE AND REJUVINATING REST.

### **I. THE PEOPLE WHO STEAL OUR PEACE**

*Ephesians 2:11&12*Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)- 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.

THIEF: Sometimes the reason that we don't have peace is that someone is stealing our peace from us. These are controlling people, often very high stress people themselves, who feel this need to make the rest of us as miserable and unhappy as they are. They love to find something wrong with us and then make it their mission to fix us. They don't stop until we either submit and comply and become miserable like they are...or until we cut ourselves off from them and purge them from our lives. They don't give us any other alternative. They take on the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives and feel that they are doing God's work.

JUDAHIZERS: In Ephesus these people called themselves "the circumcision." They believed in Jesus as their Savior but they felt that all Gentile believers needed to also become fully Jewish as well and obey all of the laws of the Jews, ceremonial, dietary, sacrificial, festivals, dress codes, interpretations of the law and so on. It was a burden they could not bear and it was tearing the church apart. They started with the joyful grace and forgiveness found through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross...but then slowly returned to all of the Jewish laws and practices and forced others to join them in this heavy load.

DANGEROUS: Do you have any "joy stealers" in your life who want to heap upon you never-ending lists of rules and regulations and requirements that would in their mind make you holy? Paul had an individual in his ministry who stole his peace and he urged Timothy to avoid him. **2 Timothy 4:14-15** "*Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. 15 You too should be on your guard against him...*" I know a person that I have to avoid. If I say anything to him, he will twist the words and use them against me. I simply need to avoid him to keep my peace.

SURPRISE: On the other hand, I have a number of strict living Amish friends who have beards and wear home sewn clothes and use horses for transportation. As far as I can tell, they like their lifestyle and they have never implied that I need to live the way they do. I personally admire many of their choices and have been inspired by their example to live a simpler and plainer life. But if they pressured me to take on their ways or their friendship with me would be over, it would steal my joy. But they don't...they have strict ways but don't force them on us.

STANDARDS: Does this mean we have no behavior standards in our families, churches and society? By no means. It just means that we lead by example and not by harsh demands. I would much rather have 50 people in church who are delighted to be there than 1000 people who feel forced and pressured to be there. The Holy Spirit is the one who leads people to change their lives, not you and me. We teach and try to be good examples, without beating on people and forcing them along. We don't want to be people who steal others' peace, but instead lead them into peace that transforms their lives from the inside out. I urge you to keep a distance from THE PEOPLE WHO STEAL OUR PEACE.

## II. THE PERSON WHO GIVES US PEACE

*Ephesians 2:13-18* But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and

*preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*

**HARMONY:** Until “the circumcision party” came to Ephesus, there was a peaceful church of Jewish and Gentile believers. The apostles in Jerusalem agreed that Gentile believers did not have to follow all of the Jewish ceremonial laws. Nor did they did not forbid Jewish believers from keeping the sacrifices and festivals and dietary codes. The two parties, Jew and Gentile, were brought together in harmony as they focused on the forgiveness of sins that Jesus Christ offers through his death on the cross. The cross is the universal symbol of Christian harmony and peace.

**DIFFERENCE:** There will always be different practices in churches from different ethnic and theological traditions. The eastern orthodox worship service is very different from ours and ours is quite different from what Brady Arneson is using on Waikiki Beach in Hawaii. But all of us are united around the cross, the innocent suffering and death of Jesus Christ, the son of God, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. He is our peace. He is our unity.

**HYMNAL:** Given time, our fellow believers may become more like us or we more like them. When we put together the Ambassador Hymnal, we started with what we had, the Concordia Hymnal, but then gleaned some wonderful hymns and prayers from a number of different ethnic backgrounds that had come into the AFLC. The Swedish confession of sin and absolution is an example or the German pre-communion questions we find in our hymnal as well as a number of very good gospel hymns from the Baptists and Methodists. And the cross of Christ is at the center of it all...that is where our unity is found.

**JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO BRINGS US PEACE.** The more we focus on him, the more our peace grows in our hearts, homes, churches and neighborhoods.

### **III. THE SATISFYING FRUIT OF PEACE**

*Ephesians 2:19-22* Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

**SOIL:** The amazing surprise in this all is that holy living and mature faith thrives in the environment of God's peace. It fails in the environment of strife, expectations and demands. The peace of God and deep rest in Christ is the soil from which the fruit of the Holy Spirit blossoms.

**WHIP:** This is true in the home as well. You can try to force your family to act a certain way but there will be no joy and it won't last. Or you can create an atmosphere of peace and rest from which the fruits of righteousness will flourish to the delight of all. There is quite a difference between children who are forced to behave against their will by strict parents and those who love to behave because it comes from their hearts. The key is the environment that produces the fruit of peace. And I am not negating the value of occasional careful and well thought out corporal punishment. Making such a peaceful and productive environment is more work but it is well worth it. Leading with too much whip is quick and easy but doesn't produce much good in the long run. Leading our flocks into green pastures and beside still waters and restoring their souls is much slower and takes much more effort and sacrifice, but it is the only thing that produces a real and healthy faith.

**KEYS:** We see here in these verses several key concepts to an environment of peace and rest:

a. **MEANINGFUL FELLOWSHIP:** *Ephesians 2:19* “... you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.” In the military they call it “esprit de corps” or the spirit of the group. When people really love each other, enjoy being together and work with harmony, there can be tremendous results. Our fellowship time together after church, visiting, laughing, listening, praying, is so important. Those who attend really develop some valuable friendships. This happens in small group Bible study classes as well. Dr. Martin’s class is a real cohesive group...the first key is **MEANINGFUL FELLOWSHIP**.

b. **FEASTING ON THE WORD OF GOD:** *Ephesians 2:20* “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” The foundation of the apostles and prophets are the Scriptures. The foundation of Jesus is the gospel taught in the Word of God. Meaningful time reading and studying God’s word feeds hungry souls and makes them grow and be healthy. It is our central activity to preach and teach the Word of God. The second key is **FEASTING ON THE WORD OF GOD**.

c. **A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS** *Ephesians 2:21* *In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.* Notice those two words again which are repeated over and over in this book: “**IN HIM.**” This implies more than head knowledge...it implies talking to God, listening to God, consciously walking with Him throughout the day. It implies a deep love for God that is motivated by the wonder of Christ dying on the cross for us. The third key, **A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP** with Jesus, creates an environment of deep love and a faith people want to find for themselves when they see it.

**SUMMARY:** We could summarize these points in this way: we create peace and rest and an environment that the Holy Spirit desires when we have **FELLOWSHIP** with God’s people, **TIME** meditating on the Word of God and a living, walking and talking relationship with Jesus. People will start to say, “You have something special and I want it too.”

**CONCLUSION:** We all need **DEEP PEACE AND REJUVENATING REST**. It comes as we avoid those people who steal our peace. It is found at the cross of Christ and flourishes as we spend time with those who have never lost the wonder that Jesus loves us and died for our sins. The fruit of peace blossoms in good Christian fellowship, as we feast on the Word of God and in our personal relationship with Jesus. If we keep these main things the main thing and keep secondary issues, secondary, we will see Christian maturity thrive among us. If you have gotten focused on secondary things and lost your peace and rest, consider getting away to family Bible camp or some other place where you can have your soul restored. Amen

**HYMN #581 “Like a River Glorious” 9 AM no song here**

**PRAYER & 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 that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen*

**BENEDICTION:** The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you, the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and grant you peace. Amen

**Closing Song chosen by Carol; 9 am Recorded “Doxology” #32**

**POSTLUDE:** Carol Gustafson