

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2020

Virtual/Online and Parking Lot Worship (10:15)



Greeting and Prayer of the Day

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all! **C: And also with you!**

A: Let us pray together, **C: Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Be Thou My Vision

Verse 1

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art: thou my best thought both by day and by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Verse 2

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord. Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower, raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Verse 3

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise, thou mine inheritance, now and always: thou and thou only, the first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Verse 4

Light of my soul, after victory won, may I reach heaven's joys, O Heaven's sun! Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Psalm 119: 129-136

129 Your decrees are wonderful; therefore I obey them with all my heart.

130 When Your Word is opened, it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

131 I open my mouth and pant, because I long for Your commandments.

132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, as You always do to those who love Your name.

133 Order my footsteps in Your Word; let no iniquity have dominion over me.

134 Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep Your commandments.

135 Let Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me your statutes.

136 My eyes shed streams of tears because people do not keep your teaching.

First Reading: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

L: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

³¹Jesus put before the crowds another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." ⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon – Pastor Paul

Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of Heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the Church / Sign of the Peace / Interlude

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.

Announcements / Final Blessing & Dismissal

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, ✠ Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. **C: Amen.**

A: Go in peace. Christ is with you. **C: Thanks be to God.**

On Our Side

Verse 1

Ev'ryone around the world, hear the joyful sound, see the heavens open up, hear the music coming down. Nothing's gonna separate us from the Father's love. I can't help but celebrate, 'cause we're not alone.

Chorus

If God is on our side, who can be against us? If God is on our side, we won't be afraid.
Though the mountains may fall, and the sky will crumble, there ain't nothin' gonna stand in our way.

Verse 2

Come on down to the riverside, wash it all away. Leave behind your troubled mind for an uncloudy day. Nothing's gonna separate us from the Father's love. I can't help but celebrate, 'cause we're not alone.

Chorus

If God is on our side, who can be against us? If God is on our side, we won't be afraid.
Though the mountains may fall, and the sky will crumble, there ain't nothin' gonna stand in our way.

(Instrumental)

Chorus

If God is on our side, who can be against us? If God is on our side, we won't be afraid.
Though the mountains may fall, and the sky will crumble, there ain't nothin' gonna stand in our way.
Nothin' gonna stand in our way. Nothin' gonna stand in our way.



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July, 2020 (7.26.20 Bulletin)

"2.0" is HERE! We are excited to announce a new experience for our online worship, and we're calling it "2.0"! On **Wednesday Nights**, join Pastor Paul and others for an online **Holden Evening Prayer**, as we begin melding some of

our typical "Celebrate!" content, along with footage from outdoor communion and other gatherings into a new Wednesday experience. Check out our Facebook and Youtube video pages for 2.0 services each week. We may also look to YOU for help with readings if you are willing/able!

The JULY issue of the STAR is here! Thanks to an anonymous donor, printed copies of our STAR newsletter will be mailed to members. Printed STARS will also be available in the "Shooting Star box" outside the church entry later this week. Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>

With the recent rescinding of Gov. Whitmer's full stay-at-home order and new guidelines by the Governor regarding different "phases" of safety for re-opening gathering venues, **we continue this week with our "Greenspace Worship" on the West Lawn. Some chairs will be available but you are encouraged to B.Y.O.C. (Bring your own chair).** Safety is our primary concern.

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser" at BLC is now full** with new DVDs for April and May virtual church services and several paper publications, including the June STAR. More recent DVDs on the way.

Altar flowers have returned to our worship services. If you would like to sign up for a particular weekend, you can call Sharon at 231-947-9880 or email her at admin@bethlehemtc.org.

Today's altar flowers are donated by: *Barbara Oster in memory of her mother, Lois Oster, on the anniversary of her birth.*

Share your name please Some of us are finding that not seeing an entire face and dealing with sunglasses causes us to have more difficulty knowing and calling other BLC members by name. If you enjoy being greeted by name please consider placing your name on your dashboard while drive-through communion is occurring. If you have an extra name tag at home you may want to consider wearing it when green space services occur. And please be sure to wear your name tag when the time comes to re-enter church.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to *Pastor Paul* at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!

Vacation Bible School (VBS) continues with "Bible Stories" each Monday at 6PM on Zoom. Registration open all summer long so go to myvbs.com/blcbiblestories and register your child TODAY to get the Zoom Link! Please contact Annie Slabaugh at annie.slabaugh@bethlehemtc.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Our next Jubilee service is scheduled for Sunday, August 30th.

The Annual Chili Cook Off has been postponed to a later date, as was our May Jubilee service. Please stay on the lookout for more updates, and we can't wait to see you and share some chili with you all when we can.

Online Fellowship Time on ZOOM continues on Wednesday with "WBLC" after our 7pm Holden Evening Prayer LiveWatch! Check your email or Facebook for more information.

"Zoom Bible Study", gathering via Zoom is going strong each Wednesday from noon until about 1:15pm, and each week we are having great conversation and fellowship. Pastor Paul and Annie co-lead this study. Our subject matter is now more of a book study using the Walt Wangerin book *Paul: A Novel*, on the famous apostle plus whatever life and ministry guides us as we meet... which gives us plenty of good stuff to talk about.