

**WORSHIP AT HOME: Week of 6/6/21**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**



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**BEGIN:** *(You may trace a cross on your forehead or make the sign of the cross.)*  
In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**CONFESS:** *(You may offer your prayer of confession to God with a repentant heart.)*  
Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

*(Read these words to yourself and know that the grace of God in Christ is for you.)*  
God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. Amen.

**PRAY:** All-powerful God, in Jesus Christ you turned death into life and defeat into victory. Increase our faith and trust in him, that we may triumph over all evil in the strength of the same Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**READ:** 2 Corinthians 4:13--5:1 and Mark 3:20-35

**SERMON:** *by Vicar Chip Lutz*

This week we step back into the Gospel of Mark. Jesus has just named the apostles, comes down off the mountain and then goes home to preach. Because of all of things He had done, there continued to be more people that wanted to be around Jesus, so much so that they arrived home they didn't even have time to eat. So one of the groups we have there in this story are the people that were there to be WITH Jesus. But we also had two other sets of people that are in this scene. Jesus's family and the scribes.

Jesus's family shows up because people were saying that He was out of his mind....which, in those times, it was implied that one was possessed by demons. Some translations say that his family thought he was out of his mind but, I doubt they thought that. But, they did show up to restrain him. This makes sense to me. It was, by all accounts, their home town too. Perhaps they didn't want the notoriety that came with

the oldest son being bucking the system. Or, maybe there were some sibling dynamics at play.

Then the third group there were the scribes. The scribes at this time in history we could equate in modern day terms as religious lawyers. They knew the God's law. That was their job. They could interpret and regulate Jewish law. Perhaps this particular group of scribes had been following him along, waiting for chances to confront Jesus because there was, after all, already a plot brewing at the beginning of Chapter 3 of Mark to destroy Jesus. So, the scribes get what they want, they get the opportunity and basically stand up and confront Jesus and tell everyone that Jesus gets His power to cast out demons comes from Satan.

And, what does Jesus do? Jesus lays a little Jesus logic on them as only Jesus can do. He doesn't attack them back...he just, basically, asks them a logical question...."Why would I do that?" Why would I attack myself? That doesn't make any sense...a house divided cannot stand. Then, he tells them about the strong man. And, when first reading this story, it's easy to glean over the strong man portion and to focus in on other things. But, for me, it's the focal point of the story because it tells us about why Jesus was there in the first place. That Jesus came to bind and plunder Satan, the strongman to keep him from having a strong hold in the world. To forgive our sins, that is, if we want to sit, listen, and follow like the crowd that was there.

Let's make no mistake, the Satan the strongman is still very active in our world. We don't talk about it much but all we have to do is turn on the news or read the paper to see what he is up to. Those are the overt things that we recognize and, as Christians, we can actively talk about, stand against, and pray with each other for. But, what about the more covert things that the strongman is doing? That is where we need to understand our enemy a little bit better.

We certainly do need to think like our enemy because the strongman, our enemy, is certainly thinking about how we think. In this regard, he's taking Jesus's own words and using them: "if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand." I think the strongman, Satan, is always looking for ways to divide the church and to get more of a stronghold.

How does he do that? Hatred, discord, Jealousy, Differing Factions, Envy, Conceit, attacking Church leaders, complacency (to just name a few) can divide the Church.

But that's not what Jesus calls for. What does He say at the end of the text today? "Here are my mother and my brothers? Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." Jesus calls for a united house because that's a house that will stand...a house that does the will of God. That is where we can join Jesus in binding and plundering the strongman if we, like the crowd, sit, listen and follow....become His family and act as His family.

Following, in this regard, isn't passive. It's leading in doing the will of God. Sometimes we look at leading and following as being mutually exclusive but, in my experience, in order to lead you have to know how to follow...and this is no exception. So, how do we

actively follow? How do we actively lead? How do we join Jesus in the fight against the strongman's efforts to gain a stronghold in our world, in our church and in our lives?

Well, we can sit and listen. Be with Jesus. The crowd in this story were there to listen. They were there to learn. They were curious. We too can be curious and wonder about how Jesus might respond in a similar situation. What would He say? What might He do?

We can also say not today, Strongman. I am not going to let you divide me from the family of Christ. I've got the grace of Christ on my side and you will have no foothold in taking this house down.

Lastly, we can step out into the possibility of Jesus. Be active in our faith. Pray with and for people. Cast away the fear that sometimes comes with being too vocal about Christ in our lives and in sharing with others. Step into the possibility of Jesus.

This, obviously, is not an all inclusive list. It's just a starting point to think about how we act and interact as Christians in the world. How do we represent Jesus? The strongman is always going to be trying to get a stronghold. Only together can we divide that house. Evil loses it's power when exposed to the light of Christ.

God grant us the strength show that light so that we might join Jesus in the fight.

PRAY: For Mount Pleasant Lutheran Church as we transition back to more regular gathering, that we may rebuild relationships with each other in the way of Jesus; for students and educators at the end of the school year, for rest and recuperation; for countries still ravaged by Covid-19, and all working to help them; for mediators and counselors, and all who seek reconciliation in the midst of divisions; for people in need of physical, mental, relational, or spiritual healing; and for ourselves...

We pray for Dick Jonas, Ross Larson, Trina Larsen, Linda Petersen, Helen Fiones, Sheila Johnson, Scott Christiansen, Karen Tyykila, Cathy Spatz, Jennifer Vyeda, Diane Poulsen, Pastor Kara Baylor, Joanne Hoorstra, Laura Luehr, Mary Burks, Tom Guyton, Kenneth Tyykila, Andy Cawley, Kim Davis, Nancy Holtz, Joel Smith, and those we name...

For David Fanelli and his family on the death of his father, William Fanelli, for Sue and Marty Weishoff and family on the death of Sue's mother, Ginger, and for Diane Poulsen, John and Donna Poulsen, and Kevin and Jaclyn Poulsen and their families on the death of husband, brother, and uncle, Ben Poulsen.

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.

BLESS: The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, ☩ be upon us now and forever. Amen.



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CONFESS: *(You may offer your prayer of confession to God with a repentant heart.)*

Gracious God, have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

*(Read these words to yourself and know that the grace of God in Christ is for you.)*

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of ✠ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. Amen.

READ: Psalm 92:1-4, 12-15

<sup>1</sup>It is a good thing to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praise to your name, O Most High;

<sup>2</sup>to herald your love in the morning  
and your faithfulness at night;

<sup>3</sup>on the psaltery, and on the lyre,  
and to the melody of the harp.

<sup>4</sup>For you have made me glad by your acts, O LORD;  
and I shout for joy because of the works of your hands.

<sup>12</sup>The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,  
and shall spread abroad like a cedar of Lebanon.

<sup>13</sup>Those who are planted in the house of the LORD  
shall flourish in the courts of our God;

<sup>14</sup>they shall still bear fruit in old age;  
they shall be green and succulent;

<sup>15</sup>that they may show how upright the LORD is,  
my rock, in whom there is no injustice.

PRAY: O God, you are the tree of life, offering shelter to all the world. Graft us into yourself and nurture our growth, that we may bear your truth and love to those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

READ: Ezekiel 17:22-24 and Mark 4:26-34

REFLECT: See the provided "Daily Discipleship" Bible Study handout for Mark 4:26-34.

PRAY: Holy God, you plant the seeds of faith in every nation. Enliven your church, so that the good news of your grace may root and grow throughout the world.

Creator, even the trees, shrubs, and flowers delight in your goodness. From the depths of the soil to the highest mountain, bring forth new plants. Restore growth to places suffering drought.

Judge of nations, we pray for our leaders and those in power. Grant them the ability to regard those under their charge with humility, dedicating their lives in service to others.

Divine comforter, you show compassion to those in need and provide relief to those who call on you. Bless all who suffer, especially people trapped in cycles of poverty and homelessness.

Sovereign God, we give thanks and pray for our church musicians, Michael and Sue. We dedicate to you the joyful noise that comes from our sanctuary: the cries of children, the melody of voice and instruments, and the songs from our hearts.

Eternal God, we give thanks for our ancestors in the faith who are now at home with you. We look forward to that day when we are reunited in your new creation.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. Amen.

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.

BLESS: The blessing of God, who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us, ☩ be upon us now and forever. Amen. Go in peace. We are the body of Christ. Thanks be to God.

