

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK WEEK OF APRIL 24, 2022

The Promise Given: Living Out Our Witness

Written by Pastor Matt Henning

Monday April 25th John's Witness

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice on one crying out in the wilderness: 'prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Mark 1:2b-4. Mark begins his gospel story with John the Baptist's witness to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus. John preached repentance and forgiveness to a world hungry for a messiah. He begins his witness with an invitation to change the world by transforming our hearts (repentance) and making a way in this world for the Kingdom of God to unfold. John's witness is one of hope, movement, and grace leading us into forgiveness. This forgiveness is an act of God for the sake of the world in the person Jesus who bears a Kingdom that is unlike anything the world has ever experienced. This is why John has such urgency in his witness to what God is about to do. It is also why we are all called by John into "repentance" in the whole of our lives. Prayer: "Almighty God, you have entered our hearts with the words of John's witness to the world. Draw us deeper into repentance by guiding us on a new way of love, grace, and mercy. Through your Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday April 26th Witness of Peace

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.' For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, 'Peace be within you.' For the Sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good." Psalm 122 6-9. In this psalm "peace" is something that is both all around us and with in us. It can live in a place like Jerusalem but it can also "be within" us. In all its forms peace is transformative of our world, hearts, and lives

by drawing us into action that is for the sake of others. Peace gives a message to the world from its creator about God's intent for all that was made. When we are at peace it says something good to the people around us. The psalmist is saying that peace in Jerusalem is a gift, not only for its citizens but for the world around it. Prayer: "God of peace, transform my heart and world through your Spirit of Peace. Guide me into ways of justice and mercy for my neighbor. Give peace to this world. Amen."

The Promise Given: In Communion

Written by Vicar Jared Fischer

Wednesday April 27th

"Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'" The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank." (Acts 9:1-9). As we begin this week, we are reminded of God calling the sinner. In the scripture we are talking about Saul/Paul and his being called by Christ but I am talking about God calling us. Yes you and me! The sinners writing and reading this passage! God has called each and every one of us to His table and we have all responded in some way.

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK

This is a good week to think about how you have been called to participate in Christianity, in communion with one another. Something tells me you were not blinded while on a mission to persecute Christians but you have had experiences where you have felt nudged to participate, volunteer, or give to the Christian community. Continue to listen for those calls. Allow them to help navigate you to be a part of this community. Prayer. “God, grant us wisdom and observation to see where you are in our lives and our community. We pray for the knowledge of your will and our role in your callings for us in the church. Amen.”

Thursday April 28th

“The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision[a] a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul[b] and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized,” (Acts 9:11-18). Let's take the time to understand the role that sin plays in our faith. We are all sinners, no better or worse than each other, and even the greatest Christians of all time, like Paul, were sinners just like you and me. As humans we can sometimes struggle with the degree in

which we sin. We struggle thinking that adultery is lesser than murder, which are both more severe than stealing etc. But to God all is sin, and all of that sin precludes us from receiving the Kingdom of God. The point of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is that all of us undeserving sinners have access to God through Jesus Christ. Murderers like Paul and other sinners like you and me have access to the Father, through the Son! Prayer. “God, we give thanks and praise for your acceptance of us sinners through the sacrifice of our Lord Christ Jesus. Without our redemption through the new covenant in His blood we are nothing and with it we will be with you in the eternal kingdom of heaven forever. Amen.”

Friday April 29th

“I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up, and did not let my foes rejoice over me. O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol, restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit. Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name. For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. As for me, I said in my prosperity, “I shall never be moved.” By your favor, O Lord, you had established me as a strong mountain; you hid your face; I was dismayed. To you, O Lord, I cried, and to the Lord I made supplication: “What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness? Hear, O Lord, and be gracious to me! O Lord, be my helper!” You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever.” (Psalm 30). Giving thanks and praise after a tragedy or a difficult time period can be hard. There are always mental struggles that

Community of Grace

DAILY WALK

come along with the confusing and sad parts of our lives individually or as a faithful group. As Community of Grace comes out of the pandemic that ravaged worship and our sense of community for almost two years, we now need to rejoice together. Our community is a strong one. God has kept us together through these difficult times and we can rejoice that we came out of that time strong and full of great fellowship. We should always act the way we are, as joyous and thankful Christians singing the praises of God in our best times and worst times. Prayer. "Good and gracious God, we give thanks and praise for our community, a safe and accepting Christian table where all can commune together. Thank you for keeping us safe and together during these trying times. Amen."

Saturday April 30th

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:11-12). If the best part of being a Christian is being saved by Christ through the redemption of our sins the next best thing has to be the celebration of that fact with other Christians. What an amazing power it is to look around at Sunday Service, Bible Study, and Confirmation Class and other events and seeing people who share the gift of being called to the church and are celebrating in the powerful knowledge that is Christ Jesus. Together we all share one voice of thanks and praise but we also share that same voice with other Christians all across the world! There are amazing Christians everywhere giving thanks to God and supporting each other through prayer. Our community is what we see on Sundays, but we are a part of a greater community of Christian believers every day. Today at Grayson Day we will be one of

many Christian groups working together with others to be the face of Christianity and, while we may differ on some things, we agree on one thing, that Jesus Christ is our Lord and savior. Prayer. "Good and gracious God, we give thanks and praise for the priesthood of all believers. We rejoice in the shared belief in your son, Jesus Christ, and the redemption of our sins by His sacrifice on the cross. Amen."

Sunday May 1st

"Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped." (Revelation 5:13-14). Today at our regular weekly church service I want you to pay attention to the singing. A quote attributed to Saint Augustine says that singing in church is like praying twice. When we sing to the Lord we are singing in a chorus of Christians in community everywhere that has been or will be. Rejoice the Lord with your voice and remember that we do so out of joy and adoration! Singing together the hymns of the day allows us to focus on the emotion and togetherness of the prayer involved and not worry about human barriers. When we sing, we sing as a group, connected together and sharing each other's faith and skill. It is an activity that requires no judgment or experience, just adulation for the Lord our God! Prayer. "Good and gracious God, we give thanks and praise to you for all that you have given us. Let our voices be proud and full of our love for you and Christ as we worship you and give you thanks. Amen."