



Trust in God's Strength
The Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

January 29, 2023

SERIES THEME: THE SAVIOR'S SERMON

The Greek word epiphany means "appearance." In the first half of this church season called Epiphany, we saw Jesus appear on the scene, beginning his ministry. He calls his disciples. It is not long before large crowds start following Jesus around Galilee. So, in the second half of this season Jesus is going to teach us what it means to be one of his followers. Jesus does this through the most famous sermon of all time. It is not delivered while standing in a pulpit but while sitting on a hill. Elevated above the crowd, Jesus' voice would carry through the air. His followers hung on his every word as the Christ talked about living an authentic Christian life. It is called the Sermon on the Mount.

THEME OF THE DAY: TRUST IN GOD'S STRENGTH

Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with a series of blessings. "Blessed are..." Jesus says, again and again. In the Latin Vulgate, these all begin with the word "beati" which translates as "blessed" or "happy." Thus, this portion of the sermon is often called "The Beatitudes." It had to give Jesus' listeners pause. For what Jesus calls blessed, the world never would. The world praises the strong and the self-sufficient. Jesus calls blessed what others would see as weak or stupid. But, like any good preacher, Jesus is trying to drive home one crucial point. The weaker you are, the more ready you are to rely on God's strength. The more difficult your present circumstances, the likelier you are to yearn for future reward. All the readings for today teach this truth. We have no real strength or wisdom of our own. But we don't need it. Because God's strength is enough to give the kingdom of heaven to the humble and poor in spirit.

Worship Leader
Organist/Pianist

Pastor Justin Wilkens
Quinton Corwin

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 572 Not What My Hands Have Done

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Glory Be to God

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



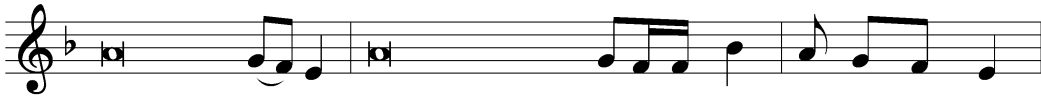
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



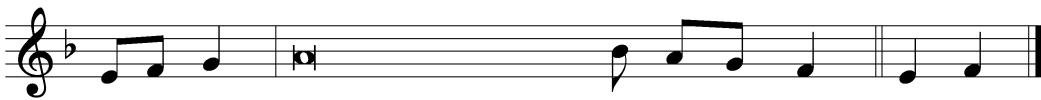
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, look with mercy on our weaknesses, and in all our dangers and needs stretch out the right hand of your majesty to help and defend us; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:11–13

The Lord promises that those who are humble, who trust in his strength rather than their own, will not be put to shame.

³ Seek the Lord, all you humble people of the earth who have carried out his commands. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. Maybe then you will be sheltered in the day of the Lord's anger. ¹¹ In that day you will no longer bear the shame of your rebellions against me. Then I will remove the proud boasters from among you, and you will never again be arrogant on my holy hill. ¹² But I will leave among you the people who are humble and weak. They will seek refuge in the name of the Lord. ¹³ The Israelites who remain will no longer act unjustly. They will not lie, and a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouth. Instead, they will graze peacefully like sheep and lie down. No one will terrify them.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 1:26–31

Paul points the Corinthians to themselves as an example of how God's strength is made perfect in weakness.

²⁶ For example, consider your call, brothers. Not many of you were wise from a human point of view, not many were powerful, and not many were born with high status. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are strong, ²⁸ and God chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things, and ^{le} the things that are not, to do away with the things that are, ²⁹ so that no one may boast before God. ³⁰ But because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us the wisdom from God, namely, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. ³¹ God did this so that, just as it is written, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 5:3



Refrain



Tone



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Gospel

Matthew 5:1–12

In the Beatitudes Jesus shows us the outcome of a life that is lived trusting in God's strength.

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up onto a mountain. When he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² He opened his mouth and began to teach them. He said these things:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit,

because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,

because they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the gentle,

because they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

because they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,

because they will receive mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,

because they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,

because they will be called sons of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,

because theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil

against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. In fact, that is how they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 690 Blest Are They

Sermon

Stand

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Eternal Lord, give us peace as we ponder the good news that you forgive our sins in Christ. Lead us to see clearly the path you have laid out for us.

Work in us so that we believe and live the Word we have heard today.

Provide courage and compassion to all who preach and teach your Word. Fill them with a love like yours as they proclaim your grace to us and all people.

Move us to love all ministers of the Word wherever they serve.

Guard and guide the families of our congregation. Lead husbands and wives to love each other with commitment, respect, and patience. Help parents to grasp the eternal value of keeping their children close to Jesus all their lives. Grant joy to those who are single, and make them a blessing to others.

Protect us from the temptations that surround us; give us pure hearts and minds.

Provide wisdom and insight to those who make laws and set policies. Give us respect for those who protect us from crime. Lead us to value the rights of our fellow citizens and to defend those who cannot defend themselves.

Bless our land with peace and prosperity so that the gospel may be proclaimed to all.

Give us passion to share the story of your love with our family and friends. Overcome unbelief, and open the hearts of people everywhere to believe the good news that Jesus has forgiven their sins and opened the gates of heaven.

Fill us with joy over every sinner who repents and comes to trust in you.

Extend your healing power to those who are sick and suffering in body or mind. [Pour out your special blessing on . . . *here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Give patience and compassion to all who care for the sick and dying.

Lift the eyes of the distressed to your love in Christ.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Gracious God, you govern and direct all things and you love all people. Hear our prayers, spoken and silent, and answer them in your wisdom and grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 750 We Give Thee but Thine Own

THE SACRAMENT

Stand

Preface

CW 165

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.


Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lived among us as a human being and revealed his glory as your only Son, full of grace and truth. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

CW 167



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en-ly hosts:
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san - na, ho -
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he,
bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho-san - na, ho-san - na, ho-san - na in the high - est.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

As we remember Jesus' death and resurrection, we thank you that you have gathered us together to receive your Son's body and blood. Send us your Spirit, unite us as one, and strengthen our faith so that we may praise you in your Son, Jesus Christ. Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

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.**

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

O Christ, Lamb of God

CW 169

O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;
grant us your peace. A - men.

Be seated

Distribution

Close Communion We ask that only those who have previously spoken to our pastor or are members in good standing of this or another WELS or ELS congregation come to Holy Communion today. Our practice of Close Communion (which has been the practice of the Christian Church throughout the ages) is in no way trying to judge anyone's faith. What we are trying to do is follow the Bible's clear teaching (1 Corinthians 11) to first study God's Word together. As we do so, we can share with/review with you what the Lord's Supper is all about. You, then, also have an opportunity to examine what we believe and teach before you come to the Lord's Supper and make a public profession that you agree with what we teach.

Distribution Hymn: 676 Take and Eat

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn: 924 Abide, O Dearest Jesus

sts. 1–4

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship and Communion

Sunday: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship, 12:00 PM Potluck with presentation afterwards.

Joint Mission Festival Service

Our Joint Mission Festival Service will be on February 5th. We will have a potluck at 12:00 following the service. After the meal, our Guest Preacher, Pastor Joel Prange will give a presentation on his work as a home missionary in Dickinson, North Dakota. If you plan on bringing anything for the meal, please contact Judy Remmers.

Council Meeting

The next council meeting will take place on February 12th following our worship service.

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Given to the Lord: Attendance: Worship 57, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,854.90, Given \$2,720.25. **To God be the glory!**

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