

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Pentecost 8 - July 18, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #230 - "Lord Jesus Christ, Be Present Now"

**Lord Jesus Christ, be present now;
Our hearts in true devotion bow.
Your Spirit send with grace divine,
And let your truth within us shine.**

**Unseal our lips to sing your praise;
Our souls to you in worship raise.
Make strong our faith; increase our light
That we may know your name aright**

**Until we join the hosts that cry,
"Hosanna to the Lord most high."
Then in the light of that blest place
We shall behold you face to face.**

**Glory to God the Father, Son,
And Holy Spirit, Three in One!
To you, O blessed Trinity,
Be praise throughout eternity!**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and**

forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

First Lesson: Amos 7:10-15

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to endure all of his words. This is what Amos says: “Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will certainly go into exile away from its own soil.” Then Amaziah said to Amos, “You seer, get out of here! Flee to the land of Judah. You may eat food and prophesy there. But you must never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the sanctuary of the king and the national temple.” Then Amos responded to Amaziah: I was not a prophet, nor was I a son of a prophet. Rather, I was a sheep breeder and I took care of sycamore fig trees. But the Lord took me from tending flocks, and the Lord said to me, “Go, prophesy to my people Israel.” (EHV)

Psalm 78

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

**O my people, hear my ‘teaching;
Listen to the words ‘of my mouth.**

**I will utter things ‘from of old,
What we have heard and what our fathers have ‘told us.**

**We will not hide them from our ‘children;
We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds ‘of the LORD.**

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

**The LORD decreed statutes for ‘Jacob
And established the law in ‘Israel,**

**So the next generation would 'know them,
And they in turn would tell their 'children.**

**Then they would put their 'trust in God
And would not forget his deeds but would keep 'his commands.**

**Glory be to the Father and 'to the Son
And to the Holy 'Spirit,
As it was in the be'ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. 'Amen.**

Refrain: Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Second Lesson: Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ. He did this in accordance with the good purpose of his will, and for the praise of his glorious grace, which he has graciously given us in the one he loves. In him we also have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in keeping with the riches of his grace, which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. He made known to us the mystery of his will in keeping with his good purpose, which he planned in Christ. This was to be carried out when the time had fully come, in order to bring all things together in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have also obtained an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in keeping with the purpose of his will. He did this so that his glory would be praised as a result of us, who were the first to hope in Christ. In him, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and in him, when you also believed, you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. He is the down payment of our inheritance until the redemption of God's own possession, so that his glory would be praised. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. The Word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it. Alleluia.

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13

Jesus called the Twelve and began to send them out two by two. He gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for their journey except a staff - no bread, no bag, no money in their money belts. They

were to put on sandals but not to wear two coats. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that area. Any place that will not receive you or listen to you, as you leave there, shake off the dust that is under your feet as a testimony against them.” They went out and preached that people should repent. They also drove out many demons. They anointed many sick people with oil and healed them. (EHV)

The Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe 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, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will 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.

Hymn #406 - “*This Is the Threefold Truth*”

**This is the threefold truth on which our faith depends;
And with this joyful cry worship begins and ends:
Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

**Made sacred by long use, new-minted for our time,
Our liturgies sum up the hope we have in him:
Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

**On this we fix our minds as, kneeling side by side,
We take the bread and wine, take him, the Crucified:
Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come
again!**

**By this we are upheld when doubt or grief assails
Our Christian faith and love, and only grace avails:
Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

**This is the threefold truth which, if we hold it fast,
Changes the world and us and brings us home at last:
Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!**

**The Sermon: Amos 7:10-15
 “Whose Word Is Right?”**

Did you ever have a difficult **choice** to make? Were you ever in a situation where you had to make an **immediate** decision, and you didn't know what to **do**? Picture yourself in **this** situation - as a **judge**, or more likely as a member of a **jury** in a **murder** case. In the course of the trial you receive conflicting information from two different people. Both stories are completely **believable** - both people seem to be totally **honest**. However, believing **one** story would mean **life** for the accused person, while believing the **other** would mean **death**. That kind of situation reminds me of the fairy tale, “The Lady And The Tiger.” In that story, a young man was placed in front of two doors. Behind one door was a beautiful **princess**, and behind the **other** door was a man-eating **tiger**. If he opened the correct door, he could **marry** the princess - but if he chose the **wrong** door, it would mean certain **death**. Life or death - all hanging on one little **decision**. Let's look at the life and death decisions which were faced in our **text** today, as the people in that text struggled with the question, **Whose Word Is Right?**

We begin by hearing the word of **Amaziah**, the priest of **Bethel**. He said to King Jeroboam II, the ruler of Israel at that time, “*Amos has **conspired** against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to **endure** all of his words.*” Those of you who are familiar with the religious scene in the days of the Divided Kingdom realize that **Bethel** was not a place where **true** believers worshiped. Jeroboam I, the first king of the **Northern** Kingdom, who had ruled some 150 years earlier, had set up **golden calves** in the cities of Bethel and Dan - an act which greatly **displeased** the LORD. God had told His people that they were **not** to worship any **graven images**, and also that they were **only** to worship in **Jerusalem**. In order to **correct** the situation, God sent **Amos** out of his **hometown**, the **Southern** Kingdom, to preach to the people of the **North**.

We **then** hear the word of **Amos**. Amos' message was a **harsh** one. “*Jeroboam will **die** by the sword, and Israel will certainly go into **exile** away from its own soil.*” We should probably note that this was not the **first** message which Amos had brought to the Israelites. He had previously pleaded with the **people** to **repent** of their apostasy, and he had also pleaded with **God** to **forgive** their

unfaithful actions. God had **listened** to the prayers of Amos, and had granted the people many extra **chances** - but not **this** time. This time the LORD would **follow through** with the destruction He had promised.

Amaziah, this priest of the false **calf-worship** religion, tried to paint a very **negative** picture of **Amos**, in the presence of King Jeroboam II. Notice how he made Amos sound like a **personal threat** to Jeroboam - as if Amos was stirring up seeds of **treason** against the king. Amaziah also craftily **omitted** the merciful **pleading** which Amos had done on behalf of the people, along with the great **faithlessness** of the **people**, which had been the real **cause** behind Amos' message of death and destruction.

Jeroboam II had a **choice** to make. **Whose Word Was Right?** Whom should he **believe** - Amos, and the **Triune God** whom he represented - or Amaziah, and the **idols of gold** which his forefathers had established in the land? His decision would be a **far-reaching** one. It would not only affect **himself**, but also everyone else in his country. Unwisely, Jeroboam chose to listen to **Amaziah** who had said, "*The land is not able to **endure** all of his (ie. Amos') words,*" and consequently also the words of the **LORD** who had sent him. Jeroboam's decision to **reject** the Word of the LORD from the mouth of His prophet resulted in the **fulfillment** of **Amos'** prophecy. King Jeroboam **died** by the sword, and the 10 Northern Tribes were led away into **exile** - never again to return as a nation.

Perhaps the advice of Amaziah has also crossed **our** minds lately. With the lack of **rain** which we've been experiencing here in western Wisconsin this year, I can well imagine some of you saying things like **this**: "*We need a **break**. The crops aren't able to **bear** these severe **drought** conditions.*" And with all of the **godless** things happening in our nation, and around the world, I can imagine **others** saying things like **this**: "*The world just isn't what it used to be. I can't even **bear** to watch the news anymore.*" But we need to remember that in **all** things, our Lord is still in **control**, and that He only wants to **bless** us - which He **has**. God has sent **enough** rain to keep **many** of our crops alive. And even the **detestable** things happening around the world can be viewed as a **blessing** - in the sense that God has **told** us in His Word that the conditions in our world will continue to **deteriorate** as the Last Day grows closer and closer. Praise God that His **Word** continues to be **true**. Conditions in the world **are** getting worse, and that tells us that the **end** of all these problems is very **near**.

Then there is the "problem" of what to do with all the **extra money** that we continue to have in our congregation. This year, in spite of the fact that we were

going through a world-wide pandemic, we again have an excess of over \$40,000 from our last fiscal year budget. What a **wonderful problem** to have! These are funds which God has given to us so we can continue to **reach out** in more ways to more people with the saving Gospel of Jesus. Our Wisconsin Synod is conducting and encouraging Gospel outreach in **42 foreign countries**, and we're exploring outreach opportunities in 17 prospective **new** mission fields as well. We wouldn't **have** these opportunities if the LORD didn't think we were capable of carrying it out. So, whom are **we** going to believe - the **skeptics** who foresee only **gloom** and **doom** for Christianity in the future, or the **LORD** who promises that His children will always be in His **protective care**? And what will our **response** be? I can safely **guarantee** that if we become **frustrated** or **complacent**, and turn **away** from the LORD, His promises of **destruction** will also rest on **us**, as they did on the people of the Northern Kingdom. But, if we **trust** in Him and cling to His **love** and **mercy**, He will continue to bless us **richly**, and crown our efforts to further His kingdom with **success**.

So much for the choice which **Jeroboam II** had to make. But in our text, the Prophet Amos **also** faced a choice. Amaziah had said, *"You seer, **get out of here!** Flee to the land of **Judah**. You may eat food and prophesy **there**. But you must never again prophesy at **Bethel**, for it is the sanctuary of the **king** and the **national temple**."* We aren't sure whether those were the words of Amaziah himself, or a message which he was delivering from King Jeroboam. But in either case after **hearing** that, we would think that Amos didn't have much of a decision to make at all! He obviously wasn't **appreciated** in Israel. Amaziah had even accused him of being there just as a **money-making** scheme. Why didn't Amos immediately pack up and head for **home**? Because **God** had **also** spoken to Amos. Amos said, *"I was not a **prophet**, nor was I a **son of a prophet**. Rather, I was a **sheep breeder** and I took care of sycamore **fig** trees. But the **Lord** took me from tending flocks, and the Lord said to me, '**Go, prophesy to my people Israel**.'"* Now, who was **Amos** going to **believe**? **Whose Word Was Right**? The **logical** choice would have been to listen to **Amaziah**. Since Amos had been **rejected**, he ought to pack up and **leave** - follow the path of least **resistance** - and save himself a lot of **headaches** and **heartaches**. But the **spiritual** choice was to follow the **LORD's** call, even though it would mean **hard times** and **persecution** for Amos himself. And **that** is the choice which Amos clearly **made**. Since it was the **LORD** who had called him away from his shepherding and farming to **preach** without any previous theological training, Amos felt that he simply could not **refuse**.

We also will be wise to choose the path which the **LORD** lays before us, in **spite** of how rough and rocky it may **appear** to be. Following the LORD may not

always be the **logical** choice, but it will always be the **correct** one. The decisions which we face together as a congregation affect not only our **own** souls, but also the souls and spiritual lives of **others** - even of those whom the LORD **will** bring into His flock in the **future** through our labors. How do we know what to do? **Whose Word Is Right?** If we stick with the LORD and His Word and promises, as Amos did, we can **always** be sure that we've made the **right** decisions - decisions which will mean spiritual **life**, and **not** eternal **death**. May God grant us the wisdom and the foresight to choose **His** Word above all others, because **God's** Word is **always** right. Amen.

Prayers:

Heavenly Father, You are the Source of all **love**. We confess to You that we have not loved You with all our **heart**, and with all our **soul**; with all our **strength**, and with all our **mind**. Neither have we loved our **neighbor** as ourselves. Please **forgive** our lovelessness, and fill our hearts with Your **Holy Spirit**, that we may love You with an ever **greater** love, and **show** it as we strive to **keep** Your commandments, and **share** the message of Your precious Law and Gospel with others.

Help us to love every one of our fellow men who is in **need**. Move us to **show** our love for them not only with our **words**, but also with our **actions**. Open our **eyes** to **see** the needs of our fellow men. Open our **hearts** to **alleviate** their suffering. Open our **hands** to **perform** deeds of kindness. And open our **pocket books** to **contribute** generous offerings for the eternal welfare of mankind. Amen.

The 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.**

Hymn #530 - "Hark! The Church Proclaims Her Honor"

**Hark! The Church proclaims her honor,
And her strength is only this:
God has laid his choice upon her,
And the work she does is his.**

**He his Church has firmly founded;
He will guard what he began.
We, by sin and foes surrounded,
Build her walls as best we can.**

**Frail and fleeting are our powers,
Short our days, our foresight dim.
We confess a choice not ours:
We were chosen first by him.**

**Though we here must strive in weakness,
Though in tears we often bend,
What his might began in meekness
Shall achieve a glorious end.**

**Onward, then, without despairing!
Calm we follow at his Word,
Thus through joy and sorrow bearing
Faithful witness to our Lord.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

P: 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.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn #548 - *“O Lord, in Prayer You Spent the Night”*

**O Lord, in prayer you spent the night,
Then sent the twelve at morning's light.
Our hearts at your request are stirred
To ask for heralds of your Word:
Send preachers forth and each one bless
With courage, zeal, and holiness.**

**Keep pastors faithful, strong, and true,
Not working for themselves but you.
Endow them with the grace they need,
The lambs to serve, the sheep to feed,
The precious flock to lead and guide
The Shepherd thus is glorified.**

**May all your people faithful be
And treat your pastors rev'rently
And with them work and for them pray,
Rememb'ring what the Scriptures say:
Receive the prophet of the Lord
And gain the prophet's own reward.**

**So may we, when our work is done,
Together meet before your throne
And joyful hearts and voices raise
In one united song of praise,
With all the bright, celestial host,
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**