

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Easter 6 - May 17, 2020

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 #500 - "For Christian Homes, o Lord, We Pray"

**For Christian homes, O Lord, we pray,
That you might dwell with us each day.
Make ours a place where you are Lord,
Where all is governed by your Word.**

**We are the children of your grace;
Our homes are now your dwelling place.
In you we trust and daily live;
Teach us to serve and to forgive.**

**United in a bond of love,
We lift our eyes to you above.
From you we gain the strength to live,
The wish to share, the joy to give.**

**Protect us and our loved ones dear
From pain and sorrow, want and fear;
Yet when we must our burdens bear,
"Your will be done" shall be our prayer.**

**And when you call us all to rest,
Then will we have a home more blest,
See all our care and sorrow cease,
And find with Christ eternal peace.**

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: Acts 17:22-31

Then Paul stood up in front of the council of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. For as I was walking around and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar on which had been inscribed, ‘To an unknown god.’ Now what you worship as unknown - this is what I am going to proclaim to you. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples made with hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives all people life and breath and everything they have. From one man, he made every nation of mankind to live over the entire face of the earth. He determined the appointed times and the boundaries where they would live. He did this so they would seek God and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘Indeed, we are also his offspring.’ “Therefore, since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill and planning. Although God overlooked the times of ignorance, he is now commanding all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness by the man he appointed. He provided proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” (EHV)

Psalm 66:

Refrain: At the works of your hands, O Lord, I lift up my voice in song; I sing for joy.

Shout with joy to God, all the earth!

Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!

**Praise our God, O peoples.
Let the sound of his praise be heard.**

**He has preserved our lives
And kept our feet from slipping.**

**Refrain: At the works of your hands, O Lord, I lift up my voice in song; I
sing for joy.**

**Come and listen, all you who fear God;
Let me tell you what he has done for me.**

**If I had cherished sin in my heart,
The Lord would not have listened;**

**But God has surely listened
And heard my voice in prayer.**

**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.**

**Refrain: At the works of your hands, O Lord, I lift up my voice in song; I
sing for joy.**

Second Lesson: 1 Peter 3:15-22

But regard the Lord, the Christ, as holy in your hearts. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that is in you. But speak with gentleness and respect, while maintaining a clear conscience, so that those who attack your good way of life in Christ may be put to shame because they slandered you as evildoers. Indeed, it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, because Christ also suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in flesh but was made alive in spirit, in which he also went and made an announcement to the spirits in prison. These spirits disobeyed long ago, when God's patience was waiting in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In this ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. And corresponding to that,

baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the body but the guarantee of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He went to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Alleluia.

Gospel: John 14:15-21

“If you love me, hold on to my commands. I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not see him or know him. You know him because he stays with you and will be in you. “I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will see me no longer, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. The one who has my commands and holds on to them is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I too will love him and show myself to him.” (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 #442 - “Have No Fear, Little Flock”

**Have no fear, little flock; have no fear, little flock,
For the Father has chosen to give you the kingdom;
Have no fear, little flock!**

**Have good cheer, little flock; have good cheer, little flock,
For the Father will keep you in his love forever;
Have good cheer, little flock!**

**Praise the Lord high above; praise the Lord high above,
For he stoops down to heal you, uplift and restore you;
Praise the Lord high above!**

**Thankful hearts raise to God; thankful hearts raise to God,
For he stays close beside you, in all things works with you;
Thankful hearts raise to God!**

**The Sermon: 1 Peter 3:15-22
“No Need To Be Afraid”**

Teachers will tell you that it’s very **interesting** to see how different students in their classrooms **react** when they’re asked to answer a **question**. **Some** students will **immediately** raise their hand, no matter **what** the question might be. Whether they know the answer or **not**, they’re willing to be **heard**. **Other** students definitely **know** the answer, but will only raise their hand if no one **else** does - if for no other reason than to end the awkward **silence**. And of course, there are **also** students who are **never** going to raise their hand, because they would be totally **embarrassed** if they gave the **wrong** answer. Maybe you remember which of those categories **you** fell into when **you** were in school. Then again, maybe you’d rather **forget**.

Today we’re going to be taking a look at how we give **answers** - not in the **classroom** - but in **real life**. Throughout our lives, God brings us opportunities to answer questions about our **faith**, and interestingly enough, when it comes to speaking about our **faith**, we can have some of the same reactions **students** have in a classroom - including **fear**. However, as we look at God’s Word in 1 Peter today, we’ll see that when it comes to speaking about our **faith**, there is **No Need To Be Afraid**.

The apostle Peter wrote this letter to a group of Christians who were undergoing **persecution**. These were very **frightening** times for them. We’re not talking about the “getting **laughed** at” kind of persecution, but rather the “your **life** is in danger if you profess **Christ**” kind of persecution. You can imagine that this kind of persecution gave many Christians at least a **little** bit of anxiety when it came to the matter of standing up for their faith. How could they know that their

witnessing wouldn't result in their **imprisonment**, or possibly even in their **death**? And yet, in **spite** of this persecution, the apostle Peter encouraged those Christians to **speak up** for their faith. He doesn't give them a **pass** and tell them it's ok to be **quiet** in this particular situation. Instead, our reading begins with this **command**, "*But regard the Lord, the **Christ**, as **holy** in your hearts. Always be prepared to **give an answer** to everyone who asks you to give a **reason** for the **hope** that is in you.*"

It was **important** for those Christians to be **up front** and **honest** about the **God** they worshiped. It was important for them to let others **know** that the reason they possessed **hope** was because of their **Lord** and **Savior** Jesus Christ. Not only was it important for them to give the **reason** for the hope that they had, but it was important for them to do it in a **loving** manner. Peter goes on to write: "*But speak with **gentleness** and **respect**, while maintaining a clear conscience.*" **What** they said was **important** - but **how** they said it was **just** as important. They were **not** to be "in-your-face" or **condescending**, but rather, they were to speak with **gentleness** and **respect**, out of Christian **humility**.

We are living in a different **time** and **culture** from the Christians who first read this letter. By God's grace, we are not **yet** facing the same kind of **persecution** in our country as those **early** Christians faced. But that **doesn't** mean that we are no longer called on to be **witnesses** for our God. We still live in a world where many people **don't** possess the hope of eternal life through Jesus, and as time goes on, their number seems to be **growing**. Some of those people are going to ask **us** about the **hope** we have, and we probably don't have to think too **hard** to come up with a time when we've been given the opportunity to give an **answer** for our faith. It **might** have something to do with why we bother to go to **church**, or what that **Bible study** thing is all about. But in our world today, it's much more **likely** that it's going to be someone wondering why we are so much at **peace** when the whole world seems to be **disintegrating** all around us, and it looks like nothing is ever going to be **normal** again. Sound familiar?

How do we **react** in a situation like that? For many people a natural reaction is **fear**. Talking about our **God**, our **faith**, and **spiritual** matters in general can be an **uncomfortable** topic, because first of all, we don't know how the other person is going to **react** to what we say. They might **disagree** with us, or they might **mock** us for our beliefs, so it's easy for us to be filled with **fear**, and to end up saying very **little**, if we even bother to say **anything** at all. But, there's **also** the temptation to err on the **other** end of the spectrum. Instead of being **silent** because we're **afraid**, we might start **ranting** and **raving** about how **foolish** or **stupid** this

whole corona virus thing is. The **Almighty God** is in control - just put your trust in **Him**. We'd be telling them what we **believe** - we'd be giving them an **answer** - but it would be in a very **unloving** way - a way that lacks the kind of **gentleness** and **respect** that God **wants** from us. Either way - staying **silent** or speaking **rudely** - is not a **God-pleasing** way of handling those situations where we are called on to be **His witnesses**.

Let's take a little close look at that **first** kind of reaction - staying **silent** because of **fear** - because that seems to be the more **prevalent** of the two. In light of what God says in the remaining verses of our text, we need to realize that there is **No Need To Be Afraid**. Peter lists at least three reasons **not** to be **afraid** when we talk about our Savior. The **first** reason is the fact that nothing really **bad** can **happen** to us. Think about it. What's the **worst** thing that could happen if we start talking about our **God**, and His **love** for us, and the **forgiveness** that He brings us through His Son, **Jesus**? Someone could make **fun** of us. Someone could **upset** us. And if we really want to think about it **pessimistically** I suppose someone could pull out a **gun** and **shoot** us for our beliefs. But, think about **this**. According to the **Lord**, **none** of these things are **bad**. Yep, you heard that **right**. And right about now you're probably thinking, "Pastor has totally **lost it**. The corona virus has finally driven him off the **deep end**." But in **fact**, God tells us that it's **good** to **suffer** for the sake of the **Gospel**. Peter makes that point again and again in this first letter. In our text he writes, "*Indeed, it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil,*" There **is** a suffering which **deserves** our fear - the suffering which our **sins** have earned - the suffering of **eternal** punishment in **hell**. But, thanks to **Jesus**, we will **never** have to fear that kind of suffering, because as the apostle writes, "*Christ suffered once for sins in our place, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*" Jesus took care of our greatest **enemy**, and in doing so He removed our greatest **fear**. Jesus **died** for our sins. He won our eternal **salvation** for **us**, and for **all** people. **Suffering** for the sake of that message, isn't something to **fear** - it's a **privilege** and an **honor**.

The **second** reason **We Don't Need To Be Afraid** to talk about our faith, is our **status** as baptized children of God. It's interesting to see how the Holy Spirit guides the apostle Peter on a bit of a **tangent** in verses 18-22 of our reading. He begins where we left off - with the thought that Jesus died for sins **once** for **all**. As he **elaborates** on that thought he writes, "*He was put to death in flesh but was made alive in spirit.*" Jesus **suffered** and **died** in His fleshly state of **humiliation**. He then **rose** from the dead **glorified**, in His state of **exaltation**. The apostle then moves from Jesus' glorious **resurrection** to His glorious descent into **hell**, where He proclaimed His **victory**. He writes, "*In which he also went and made an*

announcement to the spirits in **prison**. These spirits **disobeyed** long ago, when God's patience was **waiting** in the days of Noah while the ark was being built." Jesus proclaimed His **victory** over death to the souls of **unbelievers** who were suffering in **hell**. And **included** among those were the souls of the unbelievers who lived at the time of the great **flood**.

Having said this, the Spirit inspired Peter to segue from the subject of the **flood** to the subject of **baptism**. He writes: "*In this ark a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.*" Most of the time, we think of **flood**waters as waters of **destruction**; but Peter points out the fact that these waters also **saved** Noah and his family, as they lifted up Noah's **ark**. We can't really mention water that **saves** without thinking about the water of **baptism**. So Peter continues, "*And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you - not the removal of dirt from the body but the guarantee of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*" As the waters of the **flood** saved Noah and his family, the waters of **baptism** save **us**. By the way, this connection is the reason that many baptismal fonts, including ours here at Trinity, have **eight sides** - to remind us of the **eight people** who were saved in waters of that world-wide flood. Our **baptism** makes us **confident** that the victory over death which Jesus **won** on the cross, and then **proclaimed** on Easter Sunday, becomes **our** victory. The comfort and assurance that we are God's **children**, and that His Spirit **lives** in us through our baptism, chases away our **fears** of talking to others about our Savior.

And the **final** reason **We Don't Need To Be Afraid** is the reminder of what we will be celebrating **next** Sunday - Jesus' **ascension** into heaven. Peter writes, "*He went to heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.*" When we realize that our Lord Jesus is seated in **heaven** in the position of **power** and **authority** at God's right hand, and when we consider that He is on **our side**, **We Have No Need To Be Afraid**. After all, with the **almighty ruler** of heaven and earth in our corner - how can **anyone** or **anything** possibly cause us **harm**?

So, the next time we're called on to share with others what we **believe** about our **God**, may we keep these truths in our hearts. We **know** that nothing **bad** can **happen** to us, because Jesus has already removed our greatest **enemy**, and our greatest **fear**. We **know** that we are **baptized children** of God, and that His Holy Spirit lives in us. And finally, we **know** that Jesus is in control of **all** things, and that He will cause them to work for our **good**. With that kind of confidence, we will **always** be able to give a **gentle** and **respectful** answer for the **hope** that we

have - in **this** life as well as in the life **to come**. There is **No Need To Be Afraid**. Amen.

Prayers:

O Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord, accept our offering of **thanks** and **praise**. How great was Your devotion to the task of our **redemption**. How totally unselfish was the **sacrifice** You made in our behalf. Our sins brought You **pain**, and **suffering**, and **death**; but You brought us **life** and **salvation**. You paid our debt in **full** with Your sacrifice on the cross. You exchanged Your **righteousness** for our **sins**, so that we can stand before our God **unashamed** and fully **accepted**. In Your glorious **resurrection** we now have the certain hope of our **own** resurrection. And now, Your **intercession** to God in our behalf gives us the courage and boldness to **pray**, and the **confidence** that our prayers are always **answered**.

Through the Holy Spirit encourage us to **continually** call on Your name. Teach us to ask for the **good** things which You would **want** us to pray for. Don't let unbelief or doubt **ever** keep us from praying, or **prevent** our prayers from being heard and answered. Give us the faith to believe that the Heavenly Father will **always** accept our prayers, because You shed Your precious **blood** for us.

May our love for **You** may never be replaced by a lust for the things of this **world**. Keep us from yielding to soul-destroying **sins**. May the Holy Spirit keep us from trusting in anyone or anything to save us besides **Your** merit and sacrifice. Help us always to walk in step with the **Holy Spirit**, that being led by **Him**, we may follow Your perfect example, and thereby **encourage** one another, as we bear witness to the **source** of our faith and love.

Forgive all those times when we have failed to **trust** You, to **love** You, to keep You in our **thoughts**, to **serve** You, to continue in Your **Word**, to **pray** to You, to **praise** You, or to **witness** about You to others. **Cover** us with Your righteousness, and give us the comfort of knowing that You are our ever-living **King** who reigns **supreme** - hearing and answering our **prayers** - and causing **all things** to work for our good - even those things that **frighten** and **afflict** us. 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 #416 - *“How Firm a Foundation”*

**How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he has said
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?**

**In ev’ry condition, in sickness, in health,
In poverty’s vale, or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea -
The Lord, the Almighty, your strength e’er shall be.**

**“Fear not, I am with you. Oh, be not dismayed,
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.”**

**“When through the deep waters I call you to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be with you your troubles to bless
And sanctify to you your deepest distress.”**

**“Throughout all their lifetime my people shall prove
My sov’rign, eternal, unchangeable love,
And then, when gray hair shall their temples adorn,
Like lambs they shall still on my shoulders be borne.”**

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 #327 - *“God Be with You till We Meet Again”*

**God be with you till we meet again,
By his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you-
God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain:

**Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus’ feet.
Till we meet, till we meet-
God be with you till we meet again.**

**God be with you till we meet again,
‘Neath his wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you-
God be with you till we meet again.**

Refrain:

**Till we meet, till we meet,
Till we meet at Jesus’ feet.
Till we meet, till we meet-
God be with you till we meet again.**