

Worship at Home, August 22, 2021
The Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

In today's gospel many people take offence at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood; even many of Jesus' disciples peel off. This is the backdrop in John's gospel for Peter's confession of faith. "To whom can we go?" asks Peter, in words we sometimes sing just before the gospel is read. "You have the words of eternal life." In order to take such a stand, as Peter and Joshua did, Paul tells us to arm ourselves with the word of God. We pray in the Spirit that we might be bold ambassadors of the gospel.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GATHERING SONG

EvLW # 557 *Awake My Soul*

1. Awake, my soul, and with the sun thy daily stage of duty run;
shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise to pay thy morning sacrifice.
2. All praise to thee, who safe hast kept and hast refreshed me while I slept.
Grant, Lord, when I from death shall wake, I may of endless light partake.
3. Lord, I my vows to thee renew. Disperse my sins as morning dew;
guard my first springs of thought and will; and with thyself my spirit fill.
4. Direct, control, suggest, this day, all I design or do or say,
that all my pow'rs, with all their might, in thy sole glory may unite.
5. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heav'nly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Holy God, your word feeds your people with life that is eternal. Direct our choices and preserve us in your truth, that, renouncing what is false and evil, we may live in you, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

Joshua 24: 1-2, 14-18

In the Near East, covenant means “agreement” or “alliance.” It describes relationships and is the primary word used to characterize the relationship between God and Israel. By delivering Israel, God has already begun the relationship. Joshua calls upon the people to respond.

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, “Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

Then the people answered, “Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.”

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 34: 15-22

The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and God’s ears are open to their cry.

The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to erase the remembrance of them from the earth.

The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them and delivers them from all their troubles.

The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves those whose spirits are crushed.

Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from every one.

God will keep safe all their bones; not one of them shall be broken.

Evil will bring death to the wicked and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

O Lord, you redeem the life of your servants, and those who put their trust in you will not be punished.

SECOND READING

Ephesians 6: 10-20

Like a general giving a rousing speech to troops before battle, this letter closes by calling on Christians to be equipped for spiritual warfare against evil. The full armour of God includes truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the gift of salvation, and the word of God inspired by the Spirit.

Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL

John 6: 56-69

The Holy Gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The “hard saying” that offends Jesus’ disciples is his claim that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. The followers who return to their old lives know something about how odd this sounds. Simon Peter, on the other hand, knows something about the scarcity of living, gracious words. He asks the most important question: “To whom shall we go?”

[Jesus said,] “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever.” He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?” But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, “Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, “For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.”

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, “Do you also wish to go away?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Today we are delighted to have a sermon from Bishop Pryse.

HYMN OF THE DAY

EVLW # 810 O Jesus, I Have Promised

1. O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
remain forever near me, my master and my friend.
I shall not fear the battle if you are by my side,
nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

2. Oh, let me feel you near me; the world is ever near.
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but, Jesus, then draw nearer to shield my soul from sin.
3. Oh, let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.
Now speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
now speak and make me listen, O Guardian of my soul.
4. O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you
that where you are in glory your servant shall be too.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end;
oh, give me grace to follow, my master and my friend.

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

From our homes, we join together in prayer, responding to each petition with words that echo today's psalm, "We put our trust in you."

For the church around the world, For congregations that are struggling financially, for pastors and deacons, staff, and committee members, as they make plans for in-person worship, and for strength for the baptized to resist the evil powers of this world, O supreme Saviour, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

For the earth that you created, For the restoration of the areas devastated by wildfires, for a lowering of high temperatures, and for the will to preserve your creation, O majestic Maker, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

For the nations of the world, especially for those distributing long awaited vaccines, for wisdom as we prepare to vote in a national election, for an end to historic and continuing prejudices, and for a passion for justice and equality in our land, O peaceful Protector, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

For travellers and vacationers, For children, teachers, parents as they prepare to return to school, for youth leaving home for college or university, for the aged living apart from family members, and for constancy in our care for one another, O gracious Guardian, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

For those who are in need, for the people who live in poverty, for all who are imprisoned, for those contracting the coronavirus, especially the children, for those who this week will receive a disturbing diagnosis, and for those whom we name here before you, Beryl, Daryl, Elethia, Ferolyn, Jordon, Pat, and those we name quietly in our hearts: O holy Healer, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

For each one of us, For our households, and for perseverance in doing what is right, O faithful Friend, receive my prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

In thanksgiving for all who have died in the faith, in gladness for the life of our loved ones, and in hope for your mercy at the end of time, O ceaseless Comforter, receive our prayer: **we put our trust in you.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with us all.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us all now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

EvLW # 656 *Blest Be the Tie That Binds*

1. Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.
2. Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.
3. We share our mutual woes, our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.
4. From sorrow, toil, and pain, and sin we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign through all eternity.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Mon	Aug 23	Nehemiah 9:1-15	Ephesians 5:21—6:9	Psalm 119:97-104
Tue	Aug 24	Nehemiah 9:16-31	Ephesians 6:21-24	Psalm 119:97-104
Wed	Aug 25	Isaiah 33:10-16 J	John 15:16-25	Psalm 119:97-104
Thu	Aug 26	Exodus 32:1-14	James 1:1-8	Psalm 15
Fri	Aug 27	Exodus 32:15-35	James 1:9-16	Psalm 15
Sat	Aug 28	Exodus 34:8-28	John 18:28-32	Psalm 15
Sun	Aug 29	Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9	(1) James 1: 17-27	Psalm 15 (1) Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

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