

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Acts 17:22-31

Psalm 66:8-20

Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of praise be heard. (v8)

1 Peter 3:13-22

John 14:15-21

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty & ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven & on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, & give to all the world the Spirit of your truth & peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- 1 Peter 3:13-22

¹³Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? ¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, & do not be intimidated, ¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; ¹⁶yet do it with gentleness & reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. ¹⁷For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. ¹⁸For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which also he went & made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, ²⁰who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. ²¹And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, ²²who has gone into heaven & is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, & powers made subject to him.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. Compare St. Peter's exhortation to St. Paul's in *Galatians 5:22-26*. How are they similar & different? See also *Romans 12:1-2, 9-21*; *1 Thessalonians 5:15*. Many scholars argue that Sts. Peter & Paul say opposite & conflicting things (cf. *Galatians 2:1-21*). Is that what you see here? How so? See *Matthew 10:24-31*
2. How does the *1 Peter* lesson connect with the Gospel lesson? See *Matthew 10:16-21*; *Mark 13:9-13*; *Luke 12:8-12*; *John 15:26-27, 16:12-15*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. In a pre-modern world filled with suffering, one could argue that "why do good things happen?" is the tougher question. Read the Tower of Siloam (*Luke 13:1-5*) & the Man Born Blind (*John 9, esp. vv1-7*) gospel stories. What do they tell us about suffering? How about *Psalms 10, Ecclesiastes 3 or Proverbs 24:13-22*?
4. What do *Matthew 5:38-48, esp. v45, 6:25-34*; *Luke 12:22-32, 17:11-20* & the Lord's Prayer teach us about God's provision? See *Small Catechism: Lord's Prayer, available <bookofconcord.org>*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. How have you seen God present & active during the Covid19 crisis & its (your?) suffering? How have you seen him at work in your everyday life? How is this a "witness" or a "testimony" or a defense of the hope that is within you (v15)? Who needs to hear your gentle & reverent faith story? Tell it to them.
6. Relaunching from *Corona Virus* Keep it your goal to reach out to one other person in the congregation (not in your home/family) each day during these restrictions- it's a long way back to how we lived back in March 2020. As your congregation returns to 50+ in-person worship who can you invite to come with you? Who may need a ride? Who might enjoy a *little* extra company before or after worship? How can your congregations new online resources help break the ice?

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Sixth Sunday of Easter

05.17.20

Series: Death Has Lost Its Sting

Rev. Jared Stillions, STS

Obedience

Obedience brings suffering & blessings. In purposeful suffering, we find Christ who suffered; we don't know that until it happens.

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness & reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. (*v15b-16*)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

Those who love me will keep my word, & my Father will love them, & we will come to them & make our home with them. (*John 14:23*)

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