

Order of Worship for June 2, 2024

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty*” - Hymn #901

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm: (Joshua 1:6-9)

P: Be strong and courageous,

C: for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them.

P: Only be strong and very courageous,

C: being careful to do according to all the law that Moses My servant commanded you.

P: Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left,

C: that you may have good success wherever you go.

P: This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night,

C: so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.

P: For then you will make your way prosperous,

C: and then you will have good success.

P: Have I not commanded you?

C: Be strong and courageous.

P: Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed,

C: for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”

ALL: 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.

Kyrie: (*Lord Have Mercy*) p. 204

Gloria in Excelsis: (*Glory to God in the Highest*) pg. 204

Salutation:

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray... Lord God, as You made the walls of Jericho fall before Your army of

Israel, bring down the walls that would keep the Gospel of Christ Jesus from going into all the world, the walls of prejudice, indifference, hopelessness, and guilt so that other people may come to know You as we have; through Your Son, Christ Jesus who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Reading: *“When the Walls Came Tumbling Down.”*

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Matthew 16:13-19

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the sixteenth chapter:

C: Glory to You, O Lord

P: Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon Hymn: *“If Thou But Trust in God to Guide Thee” - Hymn #750, vs. 1-4,7*

Sermon: *“Devoted to God” - Joshua 6:13*

“And the city and all that is within it shall be devoted to the LORD for destruction.” God gave this command to the people of Israel through Joshua as they began their seven days of marching around the city of Jericho. We later read then on the seventh day when they finished circling the city seven times:

So the people shouted, and the trumpets were blown. As soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet, the people shouted a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they captured the city. Then they devoted all in the city to destruction, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys, with the edge of the sword.

“Devoted,” is our translation. But it translates a word in Hebrew that is unique to God. Here are some examples of its use:

Deuteronomy 20:17 also names six people groups who were to be subject to this: the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.

Judges 19–21 tells us the Israelite town of Jabesh-Gilead was “devoted” for not joining in battle against the Tribe of Benjamin.

Saul “devoted” priestly town of Nob, nearly wiping out the priestly House of Eli.

In 1 Samuel 15, where Saul “devoted” the Amalekites with the sword, but spared their king and kept "the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs— everything that was good." For this, Saul is rebuked by Samuel, who reminds him that God had commanded him to "completely destroy" the Amalekites.

“Devoted” is the last word of the Old Testament when Malachi 4 6 says, "... lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

God commanded not just the conquering of these places, but the destruction of the people. Today we would call it genocide. When Saul spared some of Amalek, he not only got into trouble, he was told by Samuel that he would lose his crown. It seems like he was getting into trouble for being merciful.

The concept of “devoted” is used by many to declaim Scriptures and say that God is cruel and barbaric. Others try to get around it by saying it is from the Old Testament, but they embrace just the New Testament and the love and acceptance of Jesus.

This was a hard concept for me to talk about until our weekly women’s study went over a book. One chapter was dedicated just to the concept of “devoted.” How could a God of love command genocide? The book did it this way:

Daniel was a vibrant 16-year-old who played soccer and basketball, played trombone in the band, and did well in school work. But one week he noticed that he had a hard time keeping up in basketball practice. His mom took him to the doctor. The doctor wasn’t sure, but ordered some tests. The tests showed it might be cancer.

Daniel had an appointment with a cancer doctor (cancer doctors are called “oncologists”). That doctor ordered more tests. When he visited with Daniel and his parents, he told them, “This is very serious. There is a chance to beat this, but first we must put you through a tough time.”

Daniel went through chemotherapy. He lost his hair. He became nauseous so often that he lost a lot of weight. He had pains everywhere. He asked the doctor about this. The doctor told him, “I am sorry, but this is only going to get worse. It is almost like we have to kill you to beat this.” Daniel spent most of his waking time in pain. Why did he have to go through this?

God called the people of Israel to conquer the land of Canaan which He had promised to their Father Abraham. But the Canaanites stood in the way, not so much because they

controlled the land, but even more because they were an evil barrier to God's people. Their idolatry involved the sacrifice of infants and young maidens and farmers having sexual relationships with so-called "sacred" prostitutes. We see their evil in what happened when Israelites lived among them instead of destroying them as God had commanded. The Israelites picked up their idolatry and forsook God. They began to fight among each other. Their kingdom became divided. The rich bought out the land of the poor and turned them into slaves. They grew further and further from God.

The doctor told Daniel. "We now have to try a chemo that will be tougher. It will not be fun, but this is what we need to do to destroy the cancer." He was right. As bad as it was before for Daniel, this was worse.

As bad as it might seem for God to declare that Jericho and other places were devoted to Him, it was necessary to rid the evil in front of His people. As they followed God's commands under Joshua, they kept close to God. But after that, they let the evil go on. It grew to take over them and lead to first the destruction of the northern kingdom by Assyria in 722 BC, then the south and Jerusalem in 586.

But Daniel held on and continued the treatment. Then the doctor told him the tests showed that the cancer was decreasing. It would be easy to let up and stop the chemo, but the cancer could come back even worse. So the treatment continued. Daniel still suffered, but the cancer shrunk and shrunk.

Israel failed to devote to God what He commanded them to do. In the first place, He created everything, so He can do whatever He wants with it. But so much more God loved His people and did not want them sucked into the idolatry that encouraged adultery, cheating, corruption, and murder. Yet, God did not stop. What the people of Israel failed to do, God did by killing not Canaanites, but all sin in the killing of His Son, Christ Jesus.

People ask how a good God could command the death of people like the Canaanites. But we are so selective in our concerns. We get upset, and rightly so, by the death of Palestinians, but ignore the many more who have been killed in Yemen. We use our social media to fight climate change or illegal immigration, but fail to realize how people work like slaves in Africa to mine the special metals needed for our microchips. If we set God to our standards, then God just wipes out most of humanity who we ignore. Instead God, who by His standards should wipe out all humanity to remove evil, sacrificed His own Son instead.

That is why we don't spread the Gospel of Jesus using violence, political power, or force. God rescues people from sin by the power of His love in Jesus, not by force. But the whole world is "devoted" to Him. Jesus made it that way by His death. Jesus will come again and God will destroy not just Canaanites or Hivites, but all who oppose Him. And all who have been brought to faith in Jesus will be joined with Him forever.

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Installation of Board of Directors:**Sharing Our Ministry:****Offering and Voluntary:****Service of the Sacrament p. 208****Preface:** p. 208

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father for You stuck with Your plan to truly save us from sin and did not let any sentimentality or selfishness get in the way. In Your Son Christ Jesus You have extended Your salvation to all people. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and signing . . .

Sanctus: (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

P: We give thanks to You Lord God for braking down the walls of Jericho so Your people could vanquish Your enemies. We thank You for also breaking down the walls that divide us from You and each other by the sacrifice of Your Son, Christ Jesus, on the cross. Bless us now as Jesus invites us to have the wall of sin brought down through Holy Communion, as we receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. Hear as we pray the prayer He gave us . . .

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord, and Pax Domini: (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209**Agnus Dei:** (*Lamb of God*) p. 210**Distribution of Holy Communion:**

"Let the Walls Fall Down" (Norm)

"What Is This Bread?" - **Hymn #629**

Nunc Dimittis: (*Now let us depart*) p. 211**Prayer after Communion:**

P: Christ Jesus, we thank You for this wonderful gift of forgiveness. Hold us fast to You so that we can always say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the

Lord.”

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction: p. 212

Closing Hymn: “*God Moves in a Mysterious Way*” - **Hymn # 765**

Postlude