

Order of Worship for June 22, 2025

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you,
C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: “O Christ, Our Hope, Our Hearts Desire” – Hymn #553

P: O Lord open my lips,
C: and my mouth shall declare Your praise.

P: **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. Alleluia!

P: Give glory to God, our light and life.
C: O Come, let us worship Him.

Hymn of Praise: “From All That Dwell Below the Skies” - Hymn #816

Psalm:

P: Be to me a rock of refuge, to which I may continually come;
C: You have given the command to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress.

P: You who have made me see many troubles and calamities will revive me again;
C: from the depths of the earth You will bring me up again.

P: You will increase my greatness
C: and comfort me again.

P: I will also praise You with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God;
C: I will sing praises to You with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

P: My lips will shout for joy, when I sing praises to You;
C: my soul also, which You have redeemed.

P: And my tongue will talk of Your righteous help all the day long,
C: for they have been put to shame and disappointed who sought to do me hurt.

First Lesson: Isaiah 65:1-9

R: The LORD says, “I revealed Myself to those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. To a nation that did not call on My name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ All day long I have held out My hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations - a people who continually provoke Me to My very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of impure meat; who say, ‘Keep away; don’t come near me, for I am too sacred for you!’ Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day. “See, it stands written before Me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps - both your sins and the sins of your ancestors. Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied Me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.” This is

what the LORD says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ so will I do in behalf of My servants; I will not destroy them all. I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess My mountains; My chosen people will inherit them, and there will My servants live.

R: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Second Lesson: Galatians 3:23-4:7

R: Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are His sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are His child, God has made you also an heir.

R: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: Thanks be to God.

Third Lesson: Luke 8:26-39

P: Jesus and the disciples sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, He was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do You want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and He gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region

of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So He got into the boat and left. The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with Him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

P: O Lord, have mercy on us.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Children's Message

Sermon Hymn: *"In Christ There is No East or West"* - **Hymn #653**

Sermon: *"One in Christ"* - **Galatians 3:23-4:7**

One of the most popular movies of this year is the live-action remake of Lilo and Stitch. Although there has been some controversy over the changes from the original movie, it still has the same focus. Two sisters, orphans, rely on each other and with the help of an alien dog thing and the other people and aliens in their lives, remain a family and create a new one. They repeat the phrase, "Ohana means family, and family means no one is left behind." In the climax, Stitch says "'This is my family. I found it, all on my own. It's little, and broken, but still good. Yeah, still good."

Paul didn't know about the Hawaiian concept of Ohana, or about animated movies, but he knew about family, and how God was at work creating new ones. As he traveled around on his missionary journeys, he met with people of all kinds, telling them about who Jesus was and what Jesus had done for them. That's why Paul writes to the Galatians, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27-28).

But doing so he was up against a lot of cultural inertia. Almost every culture or people group in the world does this. They have a word for themselves, and another word for everyone else. The Jews called themselves the people, and everyone else was a Gentile. The ancient Greeks had a saying, that "whoever is not Greek is a barbarian."

Paul knew that there was division in the world. He was used to dividing the world into two different groups of people. As a Jew, Paul would have said prayers in the morning that are still said every morning by Orthodox Jewish men: "Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, who has not made me a non-Jew. Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, who has not made me a woman. Blessed are You, God, our Lord, King of the universe, who has not made me a servant." Non-Jews, women, and servants couldn't be made righteous before God through the law. Paul the Pharisee knew all about divisions, knowing who he was by knowing what he was not.

The Galatians, too, knew about divisions. In their religious life, they could picture walls that separated them. In their social lives, they could picture the walls that separated them from their

neighbors. Many of them were Gentiles, non-Jewish Christians who were often still treated as outsiders by the Jewish Christians who were still trying to figure out how being a Christian was different than being a Jew. The Jews had prayed the same prayers Paul the Pharisee had prayed.

Both groups could still picture the temple in Jerusalem. It was not just a figurative wall that separated the Gentiles from the Jews and the place where God dwelled. It was an actual wall. And along with this wall had come a list of rules and regulations that also created walls between God and people. The laws separated and divided people from one another. When a group of Christians came to the Galatians after Paul had left, telling everyone that they had to become Jewish, follow the laws, before they could become Christian, even more division resulted.

Sin causes division. Sin separates us from God, and each other. Sin seeks to divide us, to make us fight among ourselves, to have us divide the world into “us” and “them.”

Paul the Pharisee may have known about divisions, but he also knew about the unity that came from Jesus. Jesus came not to divide, but to unite. Jesus came not to separate, but to join together. Jesus came to overcome the divisions caused by sin. Jesus came to end the separation between God and humanity.

The very name we use for ourselves, Christian, comes from the unity brought by Christ. The word Christian is only used three times in the Bible, and used by outsiders talking about this disruptive new religion. It first appears in the city of Antioch, a city referred to as “all the world in one city,” where you could see all the world’s richness and diversity in one place. And the marketplace was its hub. Antioch was designed like most cities of that day: A circular wall on the outside, a marketplace in the center, with the interior of the city walled in way that divided different people groups from one another.

Enter Christ-followers. Enter the Gospel. The Church came to Antioch and began breaking down the dividing barriers in a way that upset the society’s existing categories. People from all parts of the city—Jews and Gentiles alike—were suddenly coming together. The Christians were redefining community in a radical and unprecedented way, so much so, that a new word was needed to categorize what in the world was happening.

Now, the average resident of Antioch wouldn’t have been able to tell the difference between a Pharisee and a Sadducee, or other divisions that were only present within certain groups. But in Christians, they saw something different. The term “Christian” comes from the world’s realization that something new and unheard of was happening. Divisions between Jew and Gentile, or Greek and barbarian, didn’t matter. Divisions between master and slave, between employer and employee, didn’t matter. Divisions between men and women didn’t matter. Instead of their identity coming from any of those divisive aspects of their lives, a unified identity was found, created in Christ.

Pastor Carl Grulke ran into this same challenge, of figuring out how to get across the message of unity in Christ in the midst of divisions, in his work with Lutheran Bible Translators earlier this year. He relates the story as follows:

We started team checking Romans with the Wayeyi team and we had an interesting discussion around Romans 1:14, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." The focus of our discussion was on the word "barbarians" in this verse.

In Greek culture, they called themselves "Greek" or Ἕλλην and everyone else was called "barbarians" or βάρβαρος. Didn't matter where you were from; if you weren't Greek, you were barbarian and the Greeks looked down on you as uncivilized. But English has picked up this word and filled it with lots of context that probably doesn't help us understand this verse. So how should we translate it in our translation into Shiyeyi?

We talked about the word they use in Setswana for a non-Motswana person, mokwerekwere. But that word isn't polite and people would balk at it being in the Bible. The Wayeyi have another word for an outsider, mashazi, but that is the word that we are using for Gentiles. (Side note: Jewish culture is similar to Greek culture here. You've got Israel and everyone else is Gentiles.)

So, we decided to use the word mashazi there, but not capitalize it as we have done when referring to Gentiles so as to make a difference between the two. The important point is not that we use the exact equivalent word as βάρβαρος, but that it is understood to mean the "out-group". This strengthens the message here that the Gospel is for all people, those who are "insiders" and those who are "outsiders". God has called us to preach the Good News to them all, in whatever language they speak best.

Even in our melting pot American culture, as much as we try to be one people, divisions still happen. We may talk about how one of the mottos of the United States is "E pluribus Unum," or "Out of many, one," but there are still lots of divisions. Liberals and conservatives; war hawks and peace doves; rich and poor; Republican and Democrat; liberal and conservative; men and women; Pro-Life and Pro-Choice; Urban and rural; white, black, Asian, and Hispanic. Other divisions aren't based on deep ideological issues, but continue to divide us. Do you drink soda, or pop? Are you a Cyclone fan or a Hawkeye fan, a Cubs fan or a Cardinals fan, a Blackhawk fan or a Bruins fan, a Heat fan or a Spurs fan? We find many ways to divide ourselves.

Because of Christ, God has done the impossible. Because of Christ's work, reconciling the world to God, we are no longer divided. Whatever categories the Galatians could think of to divide themselves into: Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, no longer divide them. And any categories that we can think of to divide ourselves into: conservative or liberal, city people or country people, rich or poor, young or old: whatever those categories are, they no longer divide us. We are one in Christ.

That's the message for us, as well. Sin will continue to divide us, to make us treat those who are different from us in unloving ways. Jesus continues to unite us in his love for us, and our love

for him. We are then sent out into the world to break down barriers, to be wrecking balls to walls that divide. In Christ, we are one.

OGT Presentation and VBS Video Recap

Hymn of Praise: *“We Praise You and Acknowledge You”* - **Hymn #941**

ALL: Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Prayers:

The Lord’s Prayer:

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, You have prepared for those who love You such good things as surpass our understanding. Cast out all sins and evil desires from us, and pour into our hearts Your Holy Spirit to guide us into all blessedness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness”* - **Hymn #849**