



## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

### The Best is Yet to Come

*Witness: The Door of Opportunity*

September 21 & 22, 2013

#### AS WE GATHER

The day our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, He told His disciples, “You shall be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) This calling, this privilege, this commission to bear witness to Jesus is for His disciples of every generation. The world needs to know of Jesus Christ. Our Lord tells us that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world; we are to let our lights shine. (Matt. 5:13-16). The apostle Peter exhorts us to, “. . . be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect . . .” (1 Peter 3:15) Let us daily seek to be witnesses for the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love and grace we have in Christ Jesus.

#### WELCOME

***“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord. “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11***

#### HANDSHAKES & HUGS

##### + PREPARATION +

**OPENING HYMN #912**      **“Christ Is Our Cornerstone”**      *Rise for last stanza*

Christ is our cornerstone, On Him alone we build;  
With His true saints alone The courts of heav’n are filled.  
On His great love Our hopes we place Of present grace And joys above.

Here may we gain from heav’n The grace which we implore,  
And may that grace, once giv’n, Be with us evermore  
Until that day When all the blest To endless rest Are called away.

Oh, then, with hymns of praise These hallowed courts shall ring;  
Our voices we will raise The Three in One to sing  
And thus proclaim In joyful song, Both loud and long, That glorious name.

#### INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

#### CONFESSION and ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Holy God, mighty Lord,

**People: we poor sinners confess our sins before you and plead guilty for all the evil we have said, thought, and done. We have lived as if you did not matter and we mattered most. We have not honored your name nor have we been faithful in worship and prayer. We have resisted the impulse of your love and sought our own way. We have not loved you above all things nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are sorry for all our sins and beg your mercy through Jesus Christ to forgive our sins and lead us to amend our sinful lives. Amen.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

Pastor: May He who began this good work within you bring it to completion on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**People: Amen.**

#### HYMN OF PRAISE

#### “This is the Feast”

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**Refrain: This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,  
whose blood set us free to be people of God. *Refrain*

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are His. *Refrain*

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:  
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. *Amen. Refrain*

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.  
This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

#### SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us pray. O Lord, keep your Church in your perpetual mercy; and because without you we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

(Be seated)

**+ WORD +**

**OLD TESTAMENT** Amos 8:4-7 (*The Lord will remember the sins of those who do not repent.*)

Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, "When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?"-skimping the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat. The Lord has sworn by the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done.

**SECOND READING** Acts 1:4-11 (*Jesus declares His disciples to be His witness*) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

(Rise)

**HOLY GOSPEL** Luke 16:1-15 (*Jesus tells us that you cannot serve God and money.*)

Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.' "The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg-I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.' "So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, "How much do you owe my master?" " 'Eight hundred gallons of olive oil,' he replied. "The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred.' "Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?' " 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. "He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.' "The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings. "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.

(Be seated)

**CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

**SERMON HYMN #835** "On Galilee's High Mountain"

*Rise for last stanza*

On Galilee's high mountain Christ gave the great command  
In words of strength and promise Which all can understand:  
"All pow'r to Me is given To do what I shall choose;  
Therefore I send My children, Their witness I will use."

The Lord who, born of Mary, Came down as man and died,  
Who preached to all who listened, For us was crucified-  
This Lord, our living brother, In pow'r at God's right hand,  
Has chosen us to carry His truth to ev-'ry land.

His strength within my weakness Will make me bold to say  
How His redeeming power Transforms my stubborn clay;  
His touch of fire ignites me, With courage I am sent,  
My tongue-tied silence broken, With grace made eloquent.

And not alone to nations In far-away retreats,  
But ev-'rywhere I broadcast His love through crowded streets:  
The lives that my life touches, However great or small-  
Let them through me see Jesus, Who served and saved us all.

That ev'ryone He chooses, For reasons of His own,  
Will find in Christ his calling To live His love alone.  
His presence always leads us Till time no more shall be;  
Christ's strength, His love, His comfort Give us His victory.

Lord, gather all Your children, Wherever they may be,  
And lead them on to heaven To live eternally  
With You, our loving Father, And Christ, our brother dear,  
Whose Spirit guards and gives us The joy to persevere.

**SERMON** "Empowered"

*Acts 1:4-11*

(Rise)

**APOSTLES' CREED** (*found on the inside back cover of the hymnal*)

(Be seated)

**OFFERING** As your offering is collected, please sign our attendance book located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle.

(Rise)

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. Almighty God, you have empowered your people with the Holy Spirit and your Son has commissioned His people to bear witness to Him in our daily lives.

**People: Grant us by your Spirit to boldly share our faith in Christ with others in both word and deed.**

Pastor: Kind Father, your Son declared to us that we cannot serve you and also be devoted to money. Free all your baptized children from obsession with monetary gain and the goods of this world.

**People: Set our hearts on the joys of the Kingdom and the inheritance that never fades.**

Pastor: Ruler of all, hear our prayers today for all who bear positions of authority in civil government, the president, our governor, all who make and administer laws, and those who serve and protect us.

**People: Grant that they may so serve our nation that your people may lead peaceful, quiet, godly and dignified lives to your glory.**

Pastor: God of justice, deliver our common life from all cheating, swindling and robbing of our neighbor.

**People: May integrity and uprightness preserve us that each may seek not his own advantage, but the good of others.**

Pastor: Faithful Father, you give your children different tasks to do to your glory, in thankfulness to your Son and by the power of your Spirit.

**People: Grant us to work diligently in prayer and teaching the faith, and give us grace to adorn ourselves with good works and a devout hearing of your holy Word.**

Pastor: Bountiful Giver of every good, grant to your whole Church the wisdom to use the goods of this world to be a blessing to those in need, that through the mercy ministries of your people, children would find homes, the hurting would be comforted, the addicted set free, the sick and dying tended with dignity. Bring healing and hope to Dorothy, Eugene, Chris, Pat, Nancy, Helen, Eleanor, Lorina, Anna, Jean, Sarah, and Joe.

**People: Bless and comfort those who lost loved ones in the tragic shooting in Washington, D.C. and bring support to those who are affected by the flooding in Colorado.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

+ SACRAMENT +

## THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

### THE PEACE OF THE LORD

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**People: Amen.**

### AGNUS DEI

**"Lamb of God"**

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Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

(Be seated)

**DISTRIBUTION** Those guests who desire to commune who are members of another LCMS congregation may do so; if you are coming from another church background, please see the pastor or an elder first.

### HYMN #637 "Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord"

Draw near and take the body of the Lord,

And drink the holy blood for you out-poured;

Offered was He for greatest and for least, Himself the victim and himself the priest.

He who His saints in this world rules and shields, To all believers life eternal yields;

With heav'nly bread He makes the hungry whole,

Gives living waters to the thirsting soul.

Come forward then with faithful hearts sincere, And take the pledges of salvation here.

O Lord, our hearts with grateful thanks endow As in this feast of love You bless us now.

### HYMN #619 "Thy Body, Given for Me, O Savior"

The body, giv'n for me, O Savior, thy blood which Thou for me didst shed,

These are my life and strength forever. By them my hungry soul is fed.

**Refrain: Lord, may Thy body and Thy blood Be for my soul the highest good!**

With Thee, Lord, I am now united; I live in Thee and Thou in me.

No sorrow fills my soul, delighted It finds its only joy in thee. **Refrain**

Who can condemn me now? For surely The Lord is nigh, who justifies.

No hell I fear, and thus securely With Jesus I to heaven rise. **Refrain**

Though death may threaten with disaster, It cannot rob me of my cheer;

For He who is of death the master With aid and comfort e'er is near. **Refrain**

My heart has now become Thy dwelling, O blessed, holy Trinity.  
With angels I, Thy praises telling, Shall live in joy eternally. **Refrain**

**HYMN #563 “Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness”**

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day, Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;  
Fully absolved through these I am From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which at the mercy seat of God  
Pleads for the captives’ liberty, Was also shed in love for me.

Lord, I believe, were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies,  
This then shall be my only plea: Jesus hath lived and died for me.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee, Whose boundless mercy hath for me,  
For me, and all Thy hands have made, An everlasting ransom paid.

**COMMON DISMISSAL**

(Rise)

**PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Pastor: Almighty God our heavenly Father, you love us and call us away from  
our sinfulness, you redeem us through the sacrificial death of your Son,  
and you set us apart by Baptism to live holy lives to your glory. Make  
genuine our repentance, increase within us generous stewardship, and  
enable us to live to the praise of your glory in all that we say and do;  
through whom you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**BENEDICTION**

**People: Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN #894 “For the Fruits of His Creation”**

For the fruits of His creation, Thanks be to God.

For His gifts to ev’ry nation, Thanks be to God.

For the plowing, sowing, reaping, Silent growth while we are sleeping,

Future needs in earth’s safekeeping, Thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor, God’s will is done.

In the help we give our neighbor, God’s will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring For the hungry and despairing,

In the harvests we are sharing, God’s will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, Thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit, Thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us, For the truths that still confound us,

Most of all, that love has found us, Thanks be to God.

Preacher

Liturgist

Lectors

Acolytes

Organist

Music Coordinator

Pastor Gregg Stanton

Pastor Harold Bender

Jim Adams, Dan Vaclav

Noah Zimmermann, Abigail Fellenbaum, Alexander Maxwell

Roger Gottschalk

Kim Woller

**Our Congregational Spiritual Journey has Begun!** Just over 100 people have joined in small groups studies and another 30-40 people are reading “The Best is Yet to Come” on their own.

- For those in small groups, read the weekly chapter and answer the questions at the end of the chapter on your own. Then, show up with your group to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus through sharing in discussion with other Christians.
- For those simply reading the book, read the chapter sometime the week following the sermon message that ties to the spiritual life issue being addressed.

This week’s sermon, “Empowered” is related to Chapter 2: Witness: The Door of Opportunity. This is the chapter to be read this week and discuss in our groups.

May our God bless us all to “grow up in our salvation” (1 Peter 2:2) through devoting ourselves to the study of God’s Word and fellowship together as His holy people.