

10/12/08

**The Prayer of the Day** Lord God, You have called Your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out in good courage, not knowing where we go but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Old Testament Reading**

Jeremiah 20:7-9 *(God's Word Is Like a Fire)*

O LORD, you have deceived me, and I was deceived;  
you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed.  
I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me.  
For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, "Violence and destruction!"  
For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long.  
If I say, "I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,"  
there is in my heart as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones,  
and I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot.

**Epistle Reading**

1 Peter 2:9-10 *(God Calls Us Out of Darkness)*

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

**The Holy Gospel**

Luke 24:13-35 *(God Opens Eyes and Sets Hearts Ablaze!)*

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

### 1 Peter 2:4-10

4 As you come to him, the living Stone-- rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him--5 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

7 Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone," 8 and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the message-- which is also what they were destined for.

**9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

INTRO - Rather than a story, I want you to start today by thinking about something we just saw. You were just witness to, and even part of the baptism of people into God's kingdom. God tells us that in baptism people are called by Him, they are forgiven, they are given the Holy Spirit, they are saved for eternal life in heaven. Today at St. John 6 people receive these blessings.

In every case these people have been brought to baptism, encouraged in these blessings, through family, through parents, spouses, siblings. What a wonderful gift to share with others these eternal blessings that come from God.

I. Today is Lutheran Women's Missionary League Sunday, and these Epistle lesson assigned for this celebration tells us that God calls us out of the darkness of sin, into His marvelous light of forgiveness and salvation, so that we can tell others about His wonders.

A. I want you to know just how emphatic God is in this verse.

1. **But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.**

2. In Matthew 28 when the disciples are told to speak the Gospel to all people, the original Greek word means, "tell the Good News."

3. Here, the word is not just tell the good news, but a very similar word. We are told to "speak out" the excellence, the praises of God, because of what He has done for us.

B. The Lutheran Women's Missionary League has dedicated itself to telling others about God's love for over 75 years.

1. Our ladies have done it with their mites, collecting offerings that go to do mission work around the world. Some of that money has even reached Alaska.

A. Did you know that St. John received a \$75,000.00 grant in the mid 70's that helped us to renovate our building in 1975?

B. Did you know that the LWML has given 3 grants of \$75,000.00 to the Alaska Mission for Christ to help share the Gospel around Alaska?

C. But over the years the LWML has supported mission projects around the world, and helped support workers for the mission field in their education.

D. This money has gone to share Jesus with people who need His forgiveness and salvation. Jesus has been shared, so that His salvation is shared.

2. Our ladies of St. John have spoken out about God's saving love with their actions of faith and love.

A. Today there are 131 quilts on the backs of pews and chairs that have been made in the last year by the ladies of St. John.

B. Our ladies will send these quilts to Lutheran World Relief, along with Health Kits, to help share the love of God with people in need.

C. That is God's call to us today, to speak out about the excellence, the love of God and share what He has done for us.

1. It is important to reach around the world to share God's love in Jesus with those who don't know them.

2. But, if you take these words seriously, we are to speak out personally about the love of God. Personal sharing is even more often done in our own homes, neighborhoods, and towns.

3. That is what these people have done who have brought family forward for baptism.

4. Actually, that is the most effective way to share Jesus.

II. How do you keep in touch with the news in our country. Newspaper? Radio? TV? Internet? Whatever, usually the headline stories tell about bad news. They tell of crimes, scandals, accidents and tragedies. The headline about good news is much less frequent.

A. This last week there has been news about bad financial news, the banking crisis and the stock

market plunge. There has been news about the Stephens trial, about Trooper gate. Can you think of any good news that made the headlines?

1. Sometimes we can feel that way in our lives as well and we can forget the good news.
2. But as God's children, there is always good news that is worth praising God about.
  - A. Today's baptisms are great news. God is reaching out to make people His children and assure them of his saving love.
  - B. What are the blessings you are experiencing right now?

B Now consider the good news of our verse. Listen to what God has done for us.

1. **9 you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God,**
2. **You were "called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."**
3. **10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God;**
4. **once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

C. That is great news, but, maybe it can be said more personally.

1. We were in a world of sin, full of darkness and bad news, but the love and forgiveness of God gives us eternal life in His light.
2. We have failed God, sinned against Him and deserve His punishment. But, He sent His son to die for us. God actions say, that in spite of our sin, we are loved by Him.
3. We were doomed by our sin to death and hell. But now we live in the mercy of God. That is not only good news for eternity, but also for our lives in this world.

D. In a world where there is so much bad news, isn't it wonderful to be able to share Good News, really Good News? That is our call today

CONCLUSION - On this LWML Sunday, when we are called to share God's love. Thankfully, we have seen the sharing of that love in these baptisms.

This month at St. John in our sermons we are looking at behavior that sets Christians apart from others in our world. God's people know His love, and share His love and salvation with others. Who will you share this love with?