

1/18/09

**THE PSALM AND THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Psalm 66:1-9**

*(Our Psalm calls us to **SHOUT**. We will speak our praise of God loudly. Because Lutheran Christians are not always used to speaking loudly, this instruction is given for each verse of the Psalm and invocation.)*

Lay Minister: (Loudly spoken) 1 Shout with joy to God, all the earth!

**People: (Loudly spoken) 2 Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!**

Lay Minister: (Loudly spoken) 3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you.

**People: (Loudly spoken) 4 All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name."**

Lay Minister: (Loudly spoken) 5 Come and see what God has done, how awesome his works in man's behalf! 6 He turned the sea into dry land, they passed through the waters on foot—

**People: (Loudly spoken) come, let us rejoice in him.**

Lay Minister: (Loudly spoken) 7 He rules forever by his power, his eyes watch the nations—

**People: (Loudly spoken) let not the rebellious rise up against him.**

Lay Minister: (Loudly spoken) 8 Praise our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard;

**People: (Loudly spoken) 9 he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping.**

Lay Minister: (More Loudly spoken) We begin our praise of the Lord who *rules forever by his power (v. 7)* yet also *preserved our lives (v. 9)*

**People: (More Loudly spoken) In the name of God the Father, and in the name of God the Son, and in the name of God the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY Lord God, You showed Your glory and led many to faith by the works of Your Son. As he brought gladness and healing to His people, grant us these same gifts and lead us also to perfect faith in Him, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

1 Samuel 3:1–10

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*(God reveals Himself to Samuel and Samuel **listens**.)*

1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. 2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie

down." So he went and lay down.

6 Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

**THE EPISTLE LESSON** 1 Corinthians 6:12–20 page  
(*God calls us to glorify Him with our bodies.*)

12 "Everything is permissible for me"-- but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"-- but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food"-- but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." 17 But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

**THE GOSPEL LESSON** John 1:43–51 page  
(*God uses Philip to bring his friend Nathaniel to Jesus.*)

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote-- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false."

48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

50 Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that." 51 He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."



INTRO - Please turn with me in your bulletin to the bottom of the inside page. At the bottom of that page you will find our congregational mission statement which was developed after extensive study of God's word. Would you please read this with me? **Guided by God's Holy Spirit, we will share our Savior, Jesus, so our members, our community, and all people live and grow in Biblical Christian Faith.** Over the years we have summarized this mission statement with the short sentence, "We share Jesus." My question is, "Do we?"

I. In Jacksonville there was a lady my wife worked with. She knew some of the Christian faith, and I believe even had a belief in Jesus. But, she had struggles in life, and she was full of questions. Ultimately this lady started coming to worship and even joined our congregation. I remember a question in adult class, however. "If I'm struggling with my faith, if I'm struggling with my Christian life, how can I reach out to others?"

- A. I hear similar doubts expressed by Christians and church members today.
  1. Some say, "I don't know enough about the Bible to share Jesus." or, "I don't know what to say."
  2. Others say, "I need to get my life together before I can reach out to others."
  3. Maybe you've said the same.

B. Please remember that these doubts and concerns are about ourselves, not about Jesus.

II. So, please look at today's lesson and consider Philip.

- A. You can see 3 steps in Philip bringing his friend Nathanael to Jesus.
  1. Look at verse 43. First Jesus found Philip, and called him, "Follow Me." You see, Philip's witness started with Jesus' call.
  2. In verse 45 Philip then went for his friend Nathanael and told him about Jesus.
  3. When Nathanael was full of questions and doubts about Jesus, Philip had 3 simple words. See verse 46, "Come and See."
  4. The rest of the story tells of Nathanael coming to faith in Jesus, and declaring that faith.
- B. But, please don't think that Philip by himself was a man of no struggles.
  1. As we follow the disciples, of whom Philip was one, we see them full of doubt, arguing in pride, running in fear. Even when Jesus was with them they struggled.
  2. The one story in the Bible where Philip asks Jesus a question is found in John 14. Philip asks, "Show us the Father." This was a question of doubt that ignored Jesus' teaching that Jesus has to correct. Philip had his struggles.
  3. But there are two other stories about Philip where, in spite of his struggles he brings more people to see Jesus. In John 6 Philip brings the boy with the loaves and fish. In John 12 Jesus brings Greeks to Jesus.
- C. Ultimately Philip shared Jesus, not himself.
  1. In fact, perhaps Philip's struggles even helped in his witnessing.
  2. Philip knew his weaknesses, but he knew Jesus as the man who saw Nathanael while sitting under a tree. He knew Jesus as the man who fed 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish. He knew Jesus as the one who had compassion on the ill, the demon possessed. He knew Jesus as the one who had acted with love and forgiveness for the woman caught in adultery.
  3. The more Philip knew his weaknesses, the more he knew he needed Jesus.

So He could say again and again and again, not “look at me,” but, “Come and see.”

III. How about your Christian faith.

A. I won't ask if you have struggles. But, I will ask you to quietly consider what your struggles might be.

1. Perhaps you struggle with speaking truthfully, or lovingly.
2. Perhaps you struggle with temptations of the flesh.
3. Maybe you struggle with forgiving someone who hurt you.
4. Maybe you struggle with Greed, or Laziness, or Pride, identified in mideaval times as some of the deadly sins.
5. We are all sinners and face a battle and a struggle in ourselves .

B. But, for our our struggles, for each of our weaknesses, our sins, we have a Savior.

1. We have a Savior who has faced all these struggles himself, and has overcome them with a loving, faithful, and righteous life.
2. We have a Savior who willingly and lovingly died to Save us and rose again.
3. We have a Savior who still calls us to live for Him, like He called the sinner Philip.
4. We have a Savior who gives us His Holy Spirit to strengthen us to live in faith and forgiveness..

C. It is not ourselves we witness to, it is Jesus.

1. However, our struggles can point people to the one who can help us.
2. Our faith can point people to the one we trust.

CONCLUSION - This lady who worked with my wife would say to her, and to me, “Why isn't the church like an AA meeting?” She knew her weaknesses. And, she knew her Savior and learned to know him more.

One Easter Michelle and her sister Carol both showed up in worship. The pew broke they were sitting in. They were embarrassed, but, they both ended up joining the church. Then Michelle's sister, Carol, got married. Carol's husband joined the church. Carol and husband had a baby and the baby was baptized. From one person struggling with her faith, who knew Jesus, many others were asked Come and see Jesus, and they did. They did not follow a perfect person. They came to and followed the one who helped Michelle with their struggles.

We say at St. John, “We Share Jesus.” Do we?? We have no reason not to share Him, because Jesus helps us with our struggles. We have the ability to share Jesus because we don't share ourselves, but our Lord. He is what we need. He is what others need.

We say we share Jesus. Do we?