



The Third Sunday after Pentecost (C)
June 26, 2022
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†Let us pray: "Jesus, Savior, pilot me, Over life's tempestuous sea; Unknown waves before me roll, Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal. Chart and compass come from Thee. Savior, pilot me." Amen.

This not often sung hymn text in our tradition, uses rich images of the sea. Used as a metaphor, that sea can be calm as well as treacherous and dangerous. Lake Michigan can be calm and then there are the 'red flag' warnings which alert swimmers of the dangerous currents just off the shore.

In a recent Morning Prayer (06.23.22), the Dean of the Washington National Cathedral, our Cathedral, said, "I am not my own Savior." The Dean made that statement within the context of recognizing that we unconsciously think that we are in total control of our lives.

Very often, we are not conscious of who made us and the purpose for which we were made. We think that we are the pilot and not God. That said, we are not manipulated by God like a puppeteer in the heavens. We move and have our being because God's gift of free will enables us to make our own decisions. Some decisions are 'good' like legislation to help curb gun violence, and others which can cause some to be tossed against treacherous rocks off stormy coasts.

For those of us who are AA types, we just might think that we are in control of our minds, hearts and bodies. I, perhaps many of us, need to be reminded that we have a purpose in life, and that as "Children of the heavenly father", a great hymn of the Church, we are called to God's tender loving care. It is God's love which surrounds us and give us life. The "unknown waves, hiding rocks and treacherous shoals" of life remind us that we are in need of God to guard and pilot us along the way.

Jesus was well aware that he was not his own pilot, his own source in life. He reminds his disciples and us that we are called to follow him, to be with him, to journey with him to Jerusalem and beyond.

The 'call motif' in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures is one we raise up over and over in preaching. Jesus calls us by name to follow him, to journey with him into relationship, a life-giving nurturing relationship as rich as any could be imagined.

The Gospels remind us that Jesus retreated from his ministry of teaching, healing and being battered by the Scribes, Pharisees and others. He was called to be at prayer, to be one with his Father, his source of life.

Today's Gospel passage tells us that Jesus had a singular focus. He knew what was to come in Jerusalem, not the Jerusalem of the hymn, "Jerusalem, my happy home." His Jerusalem presented a dark and ominous future.

In the words of the Gospel of Luke, we hear the lament of Jesus over Jerusalem: "Nevertheless, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day... O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and

stones those sent to her, how often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were unwilling.” (Luke 13:33-34)

This past week, I asked myself how often have I been “unwilling” or ‘unable’ to find myself protected by the wings of love, the grace of God, the God of our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah. How often do we think that we are the pilots of our own lives and forget to focus on the source of life, God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer? How often do we as a community of faith forget to pray for the grace of God in our own lives, our homes, places of work and in meetings whether in-person or via Zoom?

We are not the pilots of our own lives. There are external forces and decisions by others which can interfere with what we think is best of us and those around us. Sometimes, those decisions can impact the health and safety of others which give us pause and a further need for God’s grace.

We are called to rely on the grace offered to us by God in Jesus who loves us without condition. Jesus loves all of us and cherishes us, rich, poor, healthy, sick, Republican, Democrat or Independent, white, black, brown, male, female, transgender or non-binary.

God calls us to focus on God’s tender loving and protecting care for us as God’s creatures. The story of Adam and Eve is an illustration of rejecting that love and care. The life of Jesus is an illustration of the depth and breadth of the loving protection of the Father for the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit. Can you think of times in your life when God’s love and protection have gotten you through intense times of difficulty, sadness or distress? I pray, you can!

During these many months of the Season of Pentecost also called Ordinary Time, we move week by week in the liturgical calendar. We are and will be reminded that there is nothing ordinary about the love of God. It is extraordinary in every way. We are called to embrace the extraordinary love of God, make it our own, and allow it to help us navigate through the treacherous seas of life.

Those treacherous seas of life are all around us. They are in our own hearts, in our homes, our city streets and dark alleys and in our nation, a nation which seems to struggle for “liberty and justice for all” people.

Today we are reminded that “The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord.” “She is his new creation,” and we are part of that creation. We are called by name and to do all we can to build the body of Christ as best we can.

My friends, it is the Church of Jesus which enables us to focus on the love of God, that love can help us through the tempestuous seas of life and those times of darkness when we need the all-encompassing grace of God. We need that grace to protect us, to overshadow us, to steer us clear of the waves which crash against the hard rocks of life. Jesus, one with God the Father, focused on the path before him which would bring about his death but also his resurrection.

As followers of Jesus, how do we best walk in his footsteps? How do we allow him to lead us and guide us along the way? How can we help others experience the extraordinary grace of light and life which is ours and so much needed in the world today! Amen.