

Worship August 28 2022 – 12th Sunday after Pentecost
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church – Dade City Florida
Sermon Notes “The Same Jesus”

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ, our LORD and Savior.

If there was one thing in your life that you could change, what would it be?

If there was one thing in your life that you would like to always remain the same, what would that be?

I have some good news for you today. There is someone who can help you to change if you have been caught in a life of sin and seem unable to get out and feel trapped. There is someone who is always there for you to lift you up and who does not change; someone who loves you with a lasting and unending love. There is someone who restores us and fills our lives with hope even when there seems to be no hope.

Memory Verses:

Psalm 131:3 “³O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.”

Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

In this short psalm , one of the psalms of ascents, Psalm 131 reminds us that before God and the mysteries of existence, we are like little children. And like little children, we can find solace in God’s love for us in Jesus Christ, who likewise became a little child on our behalf. While some believe that a child cannot have faith, Christ points to children as models of faith.

In Luke 18, people were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him saying, “ Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child

shall not enter it.” (Lk. 18:15-17) Similar accounts are given in Matthew 19 and Mark 10.

In John’s Gospel, Jesus issued the call to change one’s life, to be “born again,” in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. Nicodemus’ question: “How can a man be born when he is old?” Jesus’ Answer: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:1-8)

The writer to the Hebrews reminds us: Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

In Genesis, Jesus was present in creation with the Father and the Holy Spirit, when on the sixth day, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness....” (Genesis 1:26) While affirming the singularity of God, O. T. writers used the plural when speaking of God and His activities anticipating the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Tertullian said” “If the number of the Trinity also offends you,... with whom did He make man? And to whom did He make him like? (The answer must be), the Son on the one hand, who was one day to put on human nature; and the Spirit on the other, who was to sanctify man. With these did He then speak, in the Unity of the Trinity, as with His ministers and witnesses.”

In John’s Gospel...Jesus was present at the beginning of creation:

“¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...

¹⁴And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... ¹⁶And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John1:1-5;14,16-17).

The message of the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through Jesus Christ, who was, who is, and who is to come has been

proclaimed throughout the ages. The heavenly Father fulfilled his promise to send a Messiah, a Savior and Redeemer when Jesus came to earth, took on human flesh, suffered and died and paid the price in full for our sins that we might be set free from sin, death, and the power the devil.

The same Jesus who suffered and died and rose again also made a difference in the lives of many church leaders throughout history including Saint Augustine and Martin Luther.

Today, August 28 is a day recognized and celebrated in many Lutheran churches commemorating Augustine, Bishop of Hippo who died in 438 A.D. ... Renounced false teachings, baptized at Easter Vigil, 387. From pastor to Ordained to the priesthood, Bishop, and Bishop of Hippo, serving for 35 years. Writings include *Confessions* which tell of his life and conversion; And *the City of God* which contains his social and political views, a defense of Christianity; And a vision of the ideal Christian society. Established monastic rule of Saint Augustine, and Martin Luther became a monk of the Augustinian order....

In St. Augustine's *Confessions* he raised the question: "How long, O Lord, how long will you be angry? And asked the LORD to not remember past sins. He further asked: "Why not now? Why is there not this moment an end to my wickedness?"

He further recounts hearing a child's voice repeating, "Take up and read.... through which he said his countenance changed and he interpreted it to be a command from God to open the book and read the first chapter found. He opened a book of the Apostle's writings and read the first passage on which his eyes fell: "not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy; But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires." (Romans 13:13-14) Augustine reported instantly at the end of this sentence, a light of serenity flooded his heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away.

Similarly, the author to the Hebrews would enjoin us today to keep our focus on Jesus and His example and teachings...to remember

brotherly love, hospitality, prisoners, those who are mistreated; to honor marriage; to remain free from the love of money and to be content with what we have. And to not be led astray by diverse and strange teachings.

We are called to remember the promise of Jesus: “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” (Hebrews 13:5)

Therefore, we can confidently say: “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

We don’t need to try to change anything about Jesus’ call to repentance and message of salvation. We need to remember God’s grace and the power to change our lives.

The same Jesus is with us today as he was with the early disciples when he celebrated the Passover with them. He is with us with His body and blood given and shed for us for the remission of our sins as we receive those gifts of Christ again when we partake of Holy Communion.

So may we ever celebrate and remember the promise we have in our memory verse from Hebrews 13:

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Let’s pray;

Give us the faith of children, LORD. Calm us and quiet us and strengthen us for humble faith and service through your presence in Word and Sacrament. Amen.