



Introduction

The glory of God is often revealed when and where it is least expected. God uses our lips to declare that glory, inexperienced and hesitant though they may be. God uses our love to demonstrate that glory and so urges us to exercise it. God uses Jesus of Nazareth, water and the word, bread and wine, to reveal God's glory where and when God chooses. Take heed, lest the glory of God slip through our midst unnoticed.

Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people,
turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin,
receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness
of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin,
and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved.

In the name of ✙ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit,
that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn ELW # 668 / LBW # 397

O Zion, Haste

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10

God calls Jeremiah to be a prophet and consecrates him in the womb. Jeremiah's task is to preach God's word amid the difficult political realities of his time, before the Babylonian exile. He is to make God known not only to Judah, but also to the nations.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Psalm: Psalm 71:1-6

¹In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.

²**In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free;
incline your ear to me and save me.**

³Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe;
you are my crag and my stronghold.

⁴**Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.**

⁵For you are my hope, O Lord GOD,
my confidence since I was young.

⁶**I have been sustained by you ever since I was born;
from my mother's womb you have been my strength;
my praise shall be always of you.**

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Christians in Corinth prided themselves on their spiritual gifts. Paul reminds them that God gives us many gifts through the Holy Spirit, but the purpose behind all of them is love, the kind of love that God showed us in Jesus Christ.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Gospel: Luke 4:21-30

People in Jesus' hometown are initially pleased when he says that God will free the oppressed. Their pleasure turns to rage when he reminds them that God's prophetic mission typically pushes beyond human boundaries so that mercy and healing are extended to those regarded as outsiders.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

It all seems to be about identity. Who are you? Where do you come from? Aren't you Joseph's son?

That seems to be a big issue in our gospel text – who is this person? They seem to recognize Jesus, but they do not understand his words, or his actions (or maybe lack of actions). They think they know who he is – they have been hearing stories from other towns and villages in the area about this miracle worker, and they want him to do miracles in Nazareth as well. But they also seem to recognize him as someone who grew up there – the son of the carpenter. Joseph's son.

How are you identified? As someone's son or daughter? As someone's parent or sibling? How do people first identify you? Our identities seem to come mostly from family connections, but as we get older, other things also get added. Where we work, where we live, to whom we are married, to our children, and so on.

If we move away from where we grew up, as happens more and more these days, our identity changes again. We might be "the new guy or girl," or as someone who "is not from around here." There are lots of ways that we are identified. Some are good, some not so good. Some are identities that we carry all of our lives, like maybe a particular feature that we have, or something about the job we do. How we are addressed also changes with time and place. We might start out being the "youngster" on the job, and later become the supervisor and are now addressed "Sir" or "Ma'am"

Whatever our identity is now, it changes when we go home. Family reunions are especially telling. You may be the boss where you work, but at the family reunion, they are still telling stories about you when you were younger. Sometimes very embarrassing stories.

Jesus is facing that exact problem. He is home. The crowd in the synagogue includes older people who are peers with his parents. They remember Mary and Joseph and their kids. They might even have a story or two to tell about Jesus as a child.

Other's will be peers of Jesus – the same kids he grew up playing with. You know that they have lots of stories to tell! They know who Jesus is, know who his parents are, have

probably been to the home of Mary and Joseph, and even saw some of the things that Jesus the carpenter tried to build.

None of these people are really sure who Jesus is now. They want to believe that he is this miracle worker they have heard about. Some might even want to believe he is the Messiah – the one sent by God! But then, they realize that they do know him – as Joseph’s son, and they begin to question where he gained this authority. Who is this one to tell us he is the answer to a prophecy?

Identity. It is more than a piece of paper that says who we are and where we came from. It is who we are in that moment of time as well. Sometimes we have trouble remembering who we are, or who we have become. Childhood memories may plague us and cause us to doubt who we have become. For some, this is a minor annoyance; for others, it can lead to debilitating depression.

But there is always a part of our identity that never changes. As God tells Jeremiah – “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...” As God told the crowd when Jesus was baptized, “You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.” As we are told in our baptism, “child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.”

Just as Jeremiah was consecrated and appointed a prophet to the nations; just as Jesus was named and claimed by God; so too are we named and claimed in our baptism as children of God. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ – forever. No matter who questions our identity, or tries to make us think less of ourselves, we are always and forever more, claimed by God, sealed and marked. You, child of God, are loved – always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 520 / LBW # 248 *Dearest Jesus, at Your Word*

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Apostles’ Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

A brief silence.

Guide your church in the ways of faith, hope, and love. Cultivate ministries and communities of compassion that bear witness to your enduring presence among us. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to live in humility on the earth. Curb arrogance that leads to destruction of natural resources and disregard for future generations. Inspire the work of scientists who urge us to live in harmony with your creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You are the refuge of all who seek hope and freedom. Accompany immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who cross borders to find safety and opportunity. Embolden leaders to draft compassionate policies on behalf of migrants and those who assist them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Comfort with your love all who are lonely, fearful, or brokenhearted. Sustain the hope of all those who suffer in body or spirit, especially those we name now. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your grace falls upon young and old alike. Bless the gifts of children in this congregation and in this community. Give us humble hearts to follow their leadership. Inspire us with their laughter, their insight, and their curiosity. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We praise you for those who have gone before us and now see you face to face. Abide with us in this mortal life until we rest in the arms of your never ending love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # ELW # 510/ WOV # 716

Word of God, Come Down on Earth

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.