

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

JULY 11, 2021



Who is this man?

St. John United Church of Christ
10207 Lincoln Trail
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
Telephone 397-6323

Secretary – Judy Hartman
Rev. Rosemary Captain
ORGANIST – SHARON BANJAVCIC

Liturgy written by Rev. Lavon Bayler
2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 Psalm 24
Ephesians 1:3-14 Mark 6:14-29

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRELUDE: “Amazing Grace” Lani Smith

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Blessed be the God and parent of our Savior Jesus Christ!
Thank God for every spiritual blessing.

May the glory of God be known in this place!

May God’s peace dwell in this and every land!

Who shall ascend the hill to reach for God?

Who shall stand in God’s holy place?

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts,

Those who are not false or deceitful.

God speaks peace to those who are faithful.

Lift up your heads and your hearts to God.

We have come to hear the word of truth.

We turn to God, eager to receive salvation.

***OPENING HYMN: NCH 22**

“Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped”

***UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION:**

Ruler of all worlds, whose glory surrounds our unseeing eyes, our muffled hearing and our dulled emotions, come to awaken us to the mystery of your will. Speak to us a word of truth that reveals our deceit and leads us away from falsehood. Touch us with healing grace that allows us to admit our woundedness and accept the comfort you offer. Let your Spirit move among us so we may recognize your presence in one another and in

our own lives. May our response to you be faithful and our praise genuine. Amen.

***GLORIA PATRI:**

**Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit,
Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

BAPTISM: Warren Henry Stephenson
(Service on the screen)



BAPTISM RESPONSE: NCH 325

First two verses only.

“Child of Blessing, Child of Promise”

***GOSPEL: Mark 6:14-29**

This the Word of God and can be trusted.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: “Who is this man, Jesus?”

Herod, along with many others, wondered who Jesus really was. Even his family and neighbors in Nazareth did not understand who Jesus had become. Unable to accept Jesus’ claim to be God’s Son, many people made up their own explanations for his power and authority. He was accused of being Beelzebub and a follower of the devil.

Herod thought that Jesus was John the Baptist come back to life. Part of that belief might be from guilt Herod had over executing John the Baptist. Herod might think

the ghost of John the Baptist had come back to punish Herod, or haunt him for the rest of his life.

The people who were familiar with the stories from the Torah thought Jesus was Elijah. Still others believed that Jesus was a teaching prophet in the tradition of Moses, Isaiah, or Jeremiah.

Today people still have to make up their minds about Jesus. Some think that if they can name what he is – prophet, teacher, a good man – they can weaken the power of his claim on their lives. But what they think does not change who Jesus is.

Most people dislike having their sins pointed out, especially in public. The shame of being exposed is often stronger than the guilt brought on by their wrong doing. Herod Antipas was a man experiencing both guilt and shame.

Herod’s ruthless ambition was public knowledge, as was his illegal marriage to his brother’s wife, Herodias. One man made Herod’s sin a public issue. That man was John the Baptist. John had been preaching in the desert, and thousands flocked to hear him. Apparently, it was no secret that John had rebuked Herod for his adulterous marriage. Herodias was particularly anxious to have John silenced. Maybe she thought that if her sin was kept silent, she wouldn’t have to face her guilt. To keep the peace in his household, Herod imprisoned John.

Actually, Herod liked John. John was probably one of the few people he met who spoke only the truth to him. But the truth about his sin was a hard pill to swallow, and

Herod wavered at the point of conflict; he couldn't afford to have John constantly reminding the people of their leader's sinfulness, but he was afraid to have John killed. He put off the choice but his wife forced his hand and John was executed. Of course, this only served to increase Herod's guilt.

When Herod heard about the man, Jesus, who was preaching the same thing that John had proclaimed, Herod immediately identified him as John come from the grave to haunt him. Herod couldn't decide what to do with him. He didn't want to repeat the mistake he had made in the past with the Baptizer.

So, he tried threatening Jesus, just before Jesus returned to Jerusalem. When the two met briefly during Jesus' trial, Jesus would not speak to Herod. Herod had proved to be a poor listener to John and Jesus had nothing to add to the words of John. Herod responded with spite and mocking. Having rejected the messenger, he found it easy to reject the Messiah. Sinning can become easy to do if you do it long enough.

What can we learn from this story that happened so long ago? Can we identify with any of the players in this tragedy? When we make mistakes, how do we handle it? Do we try to run away from the sin and hope no one had noticed it? Do we lie about our guilt which usually makes things worse?

Jesus and John both tried to teach us that we must repent from our mistakes and ask God for forgiveness. We must change our hearts and minds and find better

ways to live, to love our neighbors, and most of all to love God. How many more messengers must die until we get the message? Amen.

MUSIC: "You'll Never Walk Alone" Video

PASTORAL PRAYER: Almighty God, in Jesus Christ, you taught us to pray, and promised that what we ask in his name will be given to us. Guide us by your Holy Spirit, that our prayers may serve your will and show your steadfast love; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of compassion, in Jesus Christ you cared for those who were blind or deaf, crippled or slow to learn. Though all of us need help, give special care to those who are struggling, especially those on our prayer list and those whose names we keep in our hearts. By our concern may they know the love you have for them and come to trust you; through Jesus Christ our healer.

Today we ask for wisdom, dear God, so we will perceive who the man, Jesus, truly is. We will continue to strive to understand and learn more about him every day. We truly desire to become more intimate with your Son, by reading his words and talking to him in prayer. We will start by repeating the prayer he gave us. . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your 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 debts as, we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us

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

PRAYER RESPONSE: Three-fold Amen

INVITATION TO OFFERING:

The earth belongs to God, and all that is in it. The world is God's creation, and so are we. All that we have is from the gifts of God, meant as a blessing for all to share. In these moments, we recognize our responsibility to manage these resources for the redemption of all God's people. Let us give with care.

OFFERTORY: "It is Well with My Soul" Philip P. Bliss

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.**

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:** With joyous praise and dancing spirits, we dedicate this offering, acknowledging our covenant responsibility to share your word and love all your people. In gratitude for the gospel of salvation, we pledge our first loyalty and highest faithfulness as disciples of Jesus Christ. Thank you for the wisdom and insight we have received. Help us now to live according to the best we know, in Jesus' name, Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: "Blessed Assurance" NCH 473**

***RESPONSIVE COMMISSION AND BLESSING:**

Remember each day that you are chosen by God.
Be open to the spiritual blessings available at all times.
Dwell in the mystery of God's will for you.
Dare to reach out in love to those who share your world.

We will seek God's counsel daily.

We will open our hearts to others' pain.

The Holy Spirit goes with you to empower you.
The love of Christ sustains you in all circumstances.

We have been blessed and fed in this place with God's words. We will share with others the joy we have known. Amen.

POSTLUDE: "Jubilate Deo" Edward H. Wetherill



PRAYER LIST: Urban Baum, Donna Isselhard, Nelson Libell, Joe Knapp, Jim Garrett, Agnes Doctolero, Julie Walker, David Seneczyn, Cathy Ganschietz, Rosemary Williams, Warren Neff, Baby Hannah Mosco, Jack Harris.