

Listen to the Teacher  
Isaiah 30:18  
May 1, 2022

Today is the Sunday to remember a couple of the Apostles, Saint Philip and St. James. We may remember Philip from the incident with the Ethiopian eunuch in the 8th chapter of Acts. An Angel spoke to Philip to head down the road to Gaza. As he travels down the road he came upon an Ethiopian eunuch who was reading from Isaiah, not the passage we have in the text for today but the text that talks of Jesus being led to the slaughter as a sheep which is silent before shearers. The eunuch wanted to know if Isaiah was talking of himself or someone else. Philip revealed that Isaiah was prophesying of Jesus. When they came to some water the eunuch who had just been taught, asked if there was anything keeping him from being baptized. Philip said if he believed with all his heart, then the Eunuch said he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and was baptized. After the baptism, the Holy Spirit snatched Philip away and the eunuch didn't see him anymore. Philip went on to tell many more of who Jesus was and what He had done.

James was the brother of John and he and John were given the name Sons of Thunder. He is, along with Peter and John one of the three that we see with Jesus at various times such as on the mount of Transfiguration. We don't have much on him other than that he was the first to be killed and is the only death of the twelve besides Judas recorded in the Bible.

Two Apostles are recognized today. They had followed Jesus around for three years, listening and learning from Jesus. Isaiah is teaching that the Lord wants to be gracious and show mercy to us. He is a God of justice who will bless all who wait for Him.

Isaiah then talks of the Teacher who will show Himself. We naturally think of this Teacher as the Lord Jesus. He will show Himself as He did to those of Philip and James' day. It is the next statement of you hearing a word behind you that speaks to us today. He says to walk in a certain way, the way that you walk, no matter if your turn to the right or to the left.

We hear that we naturally think of the Lord by the power of His Holy Spirit guiding us daily as we walk in the way Jesus has taught us to walk. We might think of the devil on one shoulder and Jesus on the other. We know the devil isn't alone in this, he along with the world and our own sinful natures will try to lead us away from Jesus, on to the path of destruction.

It is interesting that things worked out today to have this text for another day of celebration and recognition. Today we have two young men who have spent the last couple years looking into God's Word and Luther's Small Catechism as they learned of their faith.

Last year, with the virus, was a hard year to deal with learning, learning on their own and with the help of their parents. They made it through last year and have done well this year.

Today you heard from them. They told of what they have learned and come to know as true of their faith. Each profession was a little different but each was tuned to who they are in the Lord.

They haven't seen Jesus as Jesus told Thomas, he had seen with his eyes but blessed are those who don't see and yet believe. They may not have seen but they have ears and they have heard through the study, the reading and the teaching of their Teacher, their Savior, Jesus who has been teaching them the way in which they are to walk.

Many think of this day as almost like a graduation but in reality, it is just a beginning. It is a beginning where the faith they have proclaimed will be used, tried as they go about each day that the Lord grants them to be on this earth. That faith will come under fire and as Isaiah wrote, there will be times when they need to cry out to the Lord. Isaiah says that the Lord will give you bread of adversity and the water of affliction.

You might wonder why bread and water? If you don't get anything else, bread and water will sustain you but to be sustained by adversity and affliction, that seems like something that would bring you down and not lift you up? It doesn't make any human sense. Yet, this is what Isaiah was given to write.

We know that adversity and affliction was Jesus' fate as He faced the cross. Jesus said we are to take up our cross daily and follow Him. His was adversity and affliction to reach the cross, can we think that we would escape the same fate, one way or another in our daily lives?

Reilly and Zack, you have learned from the catechism, the Bible and your lessons and now you are going into life, trusting in the faith given you and that the Lord will be with you to the very end of the age. He will continue to be with you to keep the faith he gave you in your baptisms as you continue to learn and grow in His Word, the Bible. He has provided His Word to get into daily, even though there may come days when it doesn't get opened. I pray it will not gather dust for the faith you have been given, as you have learned, can be lost, and then what will you have? He also has provided His very own body and blood in His meal you will partake of this morning, realizing you are sinners in need of Him who gave His very self for you.

It has been a lot of work the past couple years but this is just the start. Yes, there will be studying, not only in your studies at school but also when you are trying to make sense out of what you are going through at the time. His Word has the words of eternal life, life, the continuation of life past this short life on earth, to the life everlasting.

We know James learned from his teacher for those three years and after about 10-15 years of living out that faith after Jesus rose to heaven, he faced the end of his life as Herod killed him. We don't know what happened to Philip, Christian tradition has him spreading the Good News in Greece, Syria and Phrygia. It is said that their remains were brought to Rome and buried together there.

We don't know what the Lord has for you two as you now live out the faith you were given. He knows each of you as He does the rest of us. He knows what will be good for you, even if you, at the time might not see a whole lot of good. Don't give up on Him. Keep doing those things He has taught you in and through His Word and Sacraments.

Many get to thinking that once they have confirmed their faith then they can just coast but we are all put on this earth for a reason. Since He has given each of us faith, we are to use that faith to tell others of the hope we have in Jesus. Yes, you can tell it by your actions but you have been blessed to also be able to put your faith into words, especially words that can point out where you and others have fallen short when it comes to living out your lives by and then telling others of a way out from the deadly trail they are traveling.

You learned the ten commandments and you also learned how Jesus never broke them but then wanted all to come to Him by paying their price for their sins by going to the cross, just as He did for you and for all people.

Jesus has come as Isaiah said. He was seen while He lived before He died on the cross and as He was seen by many, over 500 at one time after He rose from the tomb. Yes, you know He is alive, was seen alive and rose, ascended to heaven where He now rules until that day He comes in judgement to raise all who believe to eternal life with Him forever.

You have a lot of life ahead if you are like most people. You will make choices every day just like the rest of us. Joshua, when he encouraged the Israelites to continue in the faith said he wanted them to choose who they were going to serve as they were in the promised land. He said that for he and his house, he was going to serve the Lord. We pray that you will do the same.

I know you have been reading God's Word regularly as you were tested on what you read. Continue your reading. There are all sorts of things to help with this. In the Bibles you were given when you started Confirmation classes, there is a section called "A two-year reading plan" in the front pages of your Bibles on page lix. There are some directions there for you to help you to get the most out of your reading and study.

To gain even more knowledge and to be more able to apply that knowledge, Bible studies with others are available. There are youth Bible Studies and adult Bible Studies

offered. They are not required but as Christians having to deal with adversities and afflictions in your lives, why not get yourself ready to deal with them as you trust that the Lord will be with you.

You have a few more years of school with, depending on what sort of profession the Lord leads you to, maybe many more years of schooling but no matter what, you will be learning the rest of your life even if it isn't in the classroom.

I know some of this depends on your parents getting you here for now but it won't be long when you will be able to drive yourselves. I'm sure if you ask your parents to bring you, they will. They want the best for you and what could be better than to grow, not only physically to do what you will be able to do but for you to grow spiritually, continually being guided by the Lord to live out your lives in the faith.

The Lord is going to be with you as you live out your lives. He will be with you to give you that word of encouragement behind you and will be before you to lead you where He would want you to go and who He wants you to meet.

Even though you don't have classes to attend with me anymore, you can still get in touch with me to help you as well. People come for encouragement and for answers to problems that they may be having that aren't going away. I'm not God but He has placed me here with you and the rest of this congregation to be an earthly shepherd to take care of you as you go about lives that are lived to the Lord.

Jesus came as a teacher and Savior. He even taught when He was about your age as he stayed at the temple while Joseph and Mary went with the crowd towards home in Nazareth. He had to be about His Father's business. He came to show Himself as the Messiah, to let people know that He had come, the one they had been looking for. Many people listened to him, learned from Him that He was who He said He was.

You have learned who He is. He is your Savior and mine. He is also the Savior of everyone you meet. If they don't know it yet, you will have the opportunity to let them know as Jesus puts the opportunity before you.

You have a great treasure in what you know and what you have learned and what you will learn. It is worth more than all the gold in the world. It was worth so much Jesus paid with His own life as to how much value you are to Him and to those He puts in your lives.

There is no greater joy in heaven than one unbeliever is brought to faith. The Lord has given you the tools to let others know what you know. So whether you turn to the right or to the left, you have been given the Teacher, Jesus. Listen to His direction as His Holy Spirit will guide you in the days ahead, all the way to the day you are with Him forever.