

New Hope Lutheran Church

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October 17, 2021

21st Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

Oct 19

2:00 Finnish Bible Study **Finlandia-Impola Room**

Oct 20

10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St. (inside)**

2:00 Mission Circle **Finlandia-Impola Room**

Oct 21

6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**

Oct 24

10:00 Finn. Worship Service † **Voima Hall**

2:00 Eng. Worship Service † **Regent St.**

In our prayers Ruth, Fred, Esme.

Remembering Signe Malinen 94 yrs



Mighty, gracious, compassionate Lord, we pray today for the family of Signe Malinen, that you would comfort them in their grief, guide them in their sorrow, and give them your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen

Opening Hymn – How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord (580)
<https://youtu.be/gmsZrBO7Fvk>

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 91:9 – 16

⁹ If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling,

¹⁰ no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

¹¹ For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

¹² they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

¹³ You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

¹⁴ “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

¹⁵ He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

First Reading “Isaiah 53:4 – 12”

4 Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.

9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

11 After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his

knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. **12** Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Second Reading “Hebrews 5:1 – 10”

1 Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. **2** He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. **3** This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. **4** And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was. **5** In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” **6** And he says in another place, “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.” **7** During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. **8** Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered **9** and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him **10** and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel “Mark 10:35 – 45”

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.” When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son

of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

*The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting
“Serving the Master”*

In our gospel today, we find Jesus being rather counter-cultural. Everyone knows that the way the world works is that power is organized and distributed depending on how many people you can push aside as you climb the social ladder. And with centuries of experience, we – as a society - have gotten very good at pushing others aside. We ignore the poor as best as possible. We pay little attention to those beneath our station in life unless they can somehow help us get ahead. We do whatever we can to wiggle ourselves into a better life situation.

It's not pretty, but in general, this is how we humans are. This is what we are like. When we see a chance to grab a little something extra out of life, we usually tell ourselves that “*it can't hurt to try to gain a little bit more.*” Especially if we feel deserving of the honor.

And so it shouldn't surprise us that James and John from our gospel felt they were very deserving of the honors they sought. And it also shouldn't surprise us that the other disciples were upset with them. I'm usually upset when someone comes up with a good idea before I do as well!

But when Jesus had to smooth things over, he did it in a very different way than most human leaders would handle it. Jesus takes on the situation in a way that I doubt any leadership manual ever suggested. He essentially said; “You know what? It's not that you can't become first, but to succeed in the kingdom of heaven you're going at it the wrong way. To achieve success in God's eyes, you don't put yourself and your wants and your desires first, but rather you put them last. You step down in the eyes of the world, and, in the process, step up in God's eyes”.

So Jesus suggestion is that we think of ourselves as a servant. We are to serve others. But have you ever asked yourself what that might mean for you in your life?

We might think it has something to do with those times that we spend in the church kitchen, making or serving food. We might think it is about making coffee for a meeting. We might think it

has something to do with helping out in worship. Not that those jobs aren't about serving and, while I'm sure God is pleased with such responses, there is also more to it than that.

Sometimes people think serving the way Jesus labels it means that we are to be taken advantage of, that we are to always take on anything that is asked of us, or that we are to simply take orders. We might get the feeling that we are to be at the bottom of every ladder ever built.

But that isn't really servanthood the way Jesus means it. We need to be reminded that in Jesus day, servants had to take on responsibilities, always keeping their master's best interests at the forefront of their minds. So, if someone wanted them to do something that went totally against the master's way of thinking, (even if it would benefit the servant personally) they were to refuse it. That's what being a good servant was about. Just because someone ordered you to hand over the contents of the master's safety deposit box, it didn't mean that a servant did it. Servants had some serious responsibilities.

Servants were also put in charge of things. If you look at some of Jesus' parables, you find they were to look after and take care of large sums of money. They were put in charge of business matters. They were entrusted with the care of valuables. In some cases, a servant had a better life than some of the poor people of Jesus day.

So serving as Jesus meant it isn't about being stuck on the lowest rung of the ladder at all times and in all places. It's more about an attitude, an attitude of always keeping the master's best interests at heart, knowing that we have certain responsibilities to keep.

And that is an attitude that is not only to be present here in this place, but also to follow us wherever we are in our lives. It does mean that if we think it is in God's best interests to let the pregnant woman with 3 children go on ahead of us in the store line up – well then do it. It does mean that if we see someone who is in need of help; we don't shrug it off because we are too busy, but rather we ask ourselves if it would be in God's best interests to help out. If we discover someone at our door needs an ear to listen, we can't tell them we aren't good at listening until we've considered whether such action would be in the master's interest.

Perhaps most surprising is that we do this with the expectation that we may never see any apparent reward for any of those things. How often have we done things out of the goodness of

our hearts, yet never heard a word of gratitude? What might our response have been? Anger? Resentment? Then ask yourself if it is in God's best interests to hold a grudge. Remember that the best servants, the ones who rise to the top, always keep the master's best interests ahead of their own.

We are warned in this gospel that such an attitude is not the same as most of the world, so we can't expect that we can act like everyone else in our lives and still be looked upon as a favored servant of God. In general, the world likes to throw its power around. The world allows a little bit of power to go to their heads. The world seeks instant gratification for the slightest of good deeds.

Jesus says we are not to be that way. Rather, we are to take on the servant attitude. Remind yourselves that you have been given various responsibilities, responsibilities that probably won't earn you any glory in the here and now, but rather are geared towards bringing an ever greater awareness of what the kingdom of God is to be here on earth, not just for you, but for others as well. Amen.

Hymn – Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (712)
<https://youtu.be/ILelkl7qeuM>

Prayers

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

Holy One, for the gift of the church handed down through the ages and for all who carry on the servant ministry of Jesus, we praise you. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who are discerning calls to ministry in its many forms and equip them with your gifts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating One, for the lush and abundant habitat you provide for all your creatures, we praise you. Provide healing for the earth so that all living things may flourish as you intend. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Suffering One, for all who work toward peace and who lead nations with a servant's heart, we praise you. Bring justice for all who suffer violence, persecution, discrimination, hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and create places of refuge for all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful One, for all who do the work of healing in mind, body, and spirit, we praise you. Surround and comfort all who

struggle with depression, anxiety, cancer, diabetes, dementia, or any illness, that all may be healed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Sustaining One, for all who volunteer for the vitality of this congregation, we praise you. Strengthen and encourage greeters, ushers, office volunteers, bakers, counters, committee and group leaders, teachers, students, evangelist, singers, builders, nurturers, and all who serve with generous hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Risen One, we thank you for those who have shaped your church and shared your gospel. Through the witness of your saints, continue to inspire us with hope until we all are gathered at your eternal feast. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands, through Jesus Christ, our truth and life, who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. **Amen.**

Hymn – To Be Your Presence (546)
<https://youtu.be/AEEutSN3izc>