

## Sunday, July 7, 2024 – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

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### **Introduction**

Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.

### **Prayer of the Day**

God of the covenant, in our baptism you call us to proclaim the coming of your kingdom. Give us the courage you gave the apostles, that we may faithfully witness to your love and peace in every circumstance of life, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### **First Reading: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10**

<sup>1</sup>All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, “Look, we are your bone and flesh. <sup>2</sup>For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.” <sup>3</sup>So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. <sup>4</sup>David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. <sup>5</sup>At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

<sup>9</sup>David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inward. <sup>10</sup>And David became greater and greater, for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

### **Psalm 48**

<sup>1</sup>Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised,  
in the city of our God, on the LORD’s holy mountain.

<sup>2</sup>**Beautiful and lofty, the joy of all the earth, is Mount Zion,  
the summit of the north and city of the great king.**

<sup>3</sup>God is in the citadels of Jerusalem;  
revealed to be the sure refuge of the city.

<sup>4</sup>**Behold, the kings assembled  
and marched forward together.**

<sup>5</sup>As they looked, they were astounded;  
dismayed, they fled in terror.

<sup>6</sup>**Trembling seized them there;  
they writhed like a woman in childbirth;**

<sup>7</sup>with an east wind you shattered them  
like the ships of Tarshish.

<sup>8</sup>As we have heard, so have we seen, in the city of the LORD of hosts, in the city of our God—  
may God establish it forever!

<sup>9</sup>In the midst of your temple, O God,  
we meditate on your steadfast love.

<sup>10</sup>**Your praise, like your name, O God, reaches to the ends of the earth;  
your right hand is full of righteousness.**

<sup>11</sup>Let Mount Zion be glad and the towns of Judah rejoice,  
because of your judgments.

<sup>12</sup>**Make the circuit of Zion; walk round about it;  
count the number of the city's towers.**

<sup>13</sup>Consider well its ramparts; examine its strongholds;  
that you may tell those who come after.

<sup>14</sup>**Mark this—God is our God forever and ever,  
guiding us even to the end.**

## **Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10**

<sup>2</sup>I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. <sup>3</sup>And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—<sup>4</sup>was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. <sup>5</sup>On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. <sup>6</sup>But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, <sup>7</sup>even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. <sup>8</sup>Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, <sup>9</sup>but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. <sup>10</sup>Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

## **Gospel: Mark 6:1-13**

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.<sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup>If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup>They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

## Prayers of Intercession

One in the communion of saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we join our voices in prayer.

*A brief silence.*

Glorious God, you bend down to wash the feet of your disciples. Let the servant church arise in our teaching, our praying, our healing, and our doing. Make all your faithful people powerful in weakness and strong in grace. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Life-giving God, your fingers trace the heavens and your hands mold the earth. Where there is drought, bring nourishing rain. Where there is devastation from fire or flood, bring relief. Sustain the well-being of every living thing. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, you speak and the nations listen. Open those who govern to the cries of all who journey with no food or shelter, particularly people fleeing violence, those seeking freedom, and those in search of community. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, your embrace brings wholeness to those who are troubled. Anoint all who suffer in any way with the oil of healing and grant them renewal. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Welcoming God, in your presence strangers become companions and enemies become neighbors. Open our doors to those we have so easily shut out, particularly people who are different from us or who are marginalized by church or society. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Eternal God, you gather us into your house of many dwelling places. We give you thanks for our faithful departed. Inspire us by their lives of faith until, with them, we rest forever at our journey's end. In your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Holy God, holy and merciful: into your outstretched arms we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in the one who is the way, the truth, and the life, Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## A reflection for this 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

### Ready to Bear Witness

Where does power come from? The usual answers—family connections, reputation, possessions—are all rejected in this reading from Mark’s gospel. Jesus’ power is not only independent of his family connection—it is hindered by it. While it isn’t entirely clear why the people of Nazareth reject Jesus, the fact that they do may sound familiar to us. How often do we find exactly what we expect when we encounter something new? How open are we, really, to the possibility that God’s power might come from an unexpected corner? The first part of today’s reading suggests that even miracles take two things: both divine power and willing witnesses.

Perhaps Jesus sends his disciples out stripped of their possession precisely so that *they* are ready to witness to God’s power in a new way. They go without any of the usual trappings of security or wealth, with no guarantee that their ministry will be received. In fact, Mark reminds us a few verses later (Mark 6:14-28) just how hostile the world can be to receiving the proclamation of the kingdom of God. John the Baptist will lose his life because of Herod’s resistance to repentance. Nevertheless, Jesus’ teaching continues to astound, and the word continues to spread.

The willingness to bear witness, even when we are not certain of answered prayer or mission success, is a theme that unites all this day’s readings. Even the Psalm, in its simple gaze of faith, invites us to let go of results in favor of relationship. Paul’s sometimes confusing logic about spiritual experiences becomes clear as he sums up God’s word to him: “My grace is sufficient for you . . . .” That is a powerful word, which can make almost any experience an opportunity to witness to Christ’s power.



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