

Lay Preachers' Bulletin – July 2021

July's lectionary notes have been provided by The Ven. Dr. Pilar Gateman, Executive Officer and Archdeacon of Calgary.

July 4, 2021 – Pentecost 6

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

- In part, the Corinthians are being asked to think about how they think about themselves and God.
- After describing someone who had a spiritual experience Paul suggests he will boast about this man and not himself.
- Is he just being humble? Or is he showing us the value of loving God with all our heart and soul rather than things that are perhaps more obvious to others in an earthly way, like our degrees or knowledge?
- Why boast in our weakness? In 1 Corinthians 8:1 Paul reminds us that knowledge puffs up. We may know a great deal, but knowing that God is greater and we are not, grants us a perspective and freedom.
- There is freedom in not having to be the strongest, smartest, best at something. We can be “glad about [our] weaknesses” and even in all the ways we suffer hurtful behaviour from others or difficulties because it means little in the shadow of a God who is above all.
- God also speaks in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that “My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness”. So we can be assured that when we feel our weakest, or have been beaten down by others or our situations, God is there in our weakness.
- Jesus uses what is viewed as weakness (death on a cross) to overcome the darkness in us and in the world.

July 11, 2021 – Pentecost 7

Ephesians 1:3-14

- Being chosen matters. It matters to us as children when teams are being picked in school. It matters as adults when someone honours us with a request to be part of a special event.
- But being chosen before we were born reminds us of Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations”. Psalm 139:16, Romans 8:29, Psalm 139: 1-14, Isaiah 49:5 and many other passages speak of God knowing us before we were born.
- God also knows what will be our fullest meaning in life. He predestines us for that purpose and our lives are the fullest, most beautiful, joyful reflection of God when we live into that purpose.
- What an amazing privilege we are given to be chosen by God with a purpose. Can we live into that joy and love? How might we do that?

July 18, 2021 – Pentecost 8

Ephesians 2:11-22

- Do we think of ourselves as once having been “without hope”? Do we consider our lives in Christ to bring us joy, peace, hope? It’s an important question to think about our lives with and without Christ. Paul makes a very clear distinction of what it looks like for the Ephesians.
- Ephesians is a book rich in showing us who we are not only as individual Christians but who we are meant to be as a body of Christ – living together.

- He describes Christ as “our peace” and the one who has made “the two groups one” (meaning Gentiles and Jews).
- Jesus “creates in himself **one** new humanity” and so unites us to God. So that in it’s truest form, we are most showing God’s glory to the world when we are united, together and reconciled.
- When our goal is that unity and we can give up our own need to be right, or superior we are “fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household”
- Unity is a signpost of a healthy Christian community and reflects the God we worship.

July 25, 2021 – Pentecost 9

Ephesians 3:14-21

- Paul shares his prayer for his Ephesian brothers and sisters here.
- He begins his prayer by being clear that the God he prays to is the God above all Gods and the one from whom we all receive our identity and purpose.
- The first part of the prayer is that “he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” what an amazing statement of confidence in God’s power and in what God can do in our inner spiritual lives.
- What would happen if the roots of our lives were “established in love” would not the fruit be love? Would not we see everyone we meet as a beloved of God also... made in the image of the God who *is* love.

- The depth of the love of Christ is described as “surpassing knowledge” and so must be for us something that we cannot describe with words alone but becomes a part of who we are when we are “Filled to the measure of all the fullness of God”.
- We recognize the final piece of the prayer for the final words of our Eucharist service. A sending out message that we go out into the world with more ability to accomplish kingdom work that we can even humanly imagine... in fact we can't even ask for all that God is willing to manifest in our lives. An abundant God, indeed.