

Monday, May 3, 2021 - Scripture: Psalm 119:5-10; Song: "Christ Is Our Cornerstone"

Yesterday we celebrated the Confirmation of 3 of our young adults. The sermon hymn is now our hymn for today's devotion. Its title, "Christ is our Cornerstone", I pray, will become the theme of their lives of faith that they promised to live for the rest of their lives. Many temptations will come their way as they do for all of us. Many of those temptations will be the devil trying to convince them, as he does to all of us, that there are other cornerstones for their lives besides Jesus that might be better for them. If we choose any of them though, we quickly learn that these cornerstones collapse, and we are left with nothing. The Psalm printed at the beginning of the Hymn video I have chosen, Psalm 119:5-10, gives the reasons I chose this hymn yesterday and for today's devotion. It's what I want for these young people (it even refers to the young person in verse 90) and for all of you. These are its words: "Blessed are those who are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart—they do no wrong but follow his ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all your commands. I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me. How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands." The hymn puts it this way, "Christ is our cornerstone, on him alone we build." And then a little later on: "On him alone, our hopes we place, Of present grace and joys above." Too often we want to follow our own ways, and that doesn't work, whether it's in how to deal with the pandemic or how we live our lives as the Psalm says, obeying God's commands or our own. Both the hymn and Scripture verses point to doing it God's way and not ours, something our sinful nature isn't comfortable with, to say the least. But the Psalm also tells us the blessings of following God's commands. We will not be put to shame. Pray for our confirmands who publicly expressed their faith yesterday, that Christ may be the cornerstone of their lives. Then pray that he might be the cornerstone of your lives as well.

[Hymn 912 Christ Is Our Cornerstone](#)

Wednesday, May 5, 2021 - Scripture: Psalm 16:7-8; Song: "Alive & Breathing"

Today is Song Devotion 203 since early last year during the pandemic when I began to write and share these devotions with you. Much has happened since then, some of it good, and a lot of it bad. And those who focus on the bad seem to be the ones who are struggling most. Whether it's, "Why do I have to wear a mask?" or "Is Covid-19 real?" or why hasn't God rescued us from this mess, focusing on the bad doesn't help. Our song for today from Matt Mahar is called "Alive and Breathing." He encourages us to focus on the blessings from God in our lives, including the fact that we are still alive and

breathing. The chorus says, "There's still joy in the morning, Hope still walks with the hurting, If you're still alive and breathing, praise the Lord." He is encouraging to focus on the good. In the words of the Psalmist from Psalm 16:7 and 8: "I will praise the Lord, who counsels me, even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken." The Scripture and the song fit together well as we continue to deal with the questions I posed above and the pandemic goes on. We need to focus on the good things God has given us and look to him for counsel, to always keep our eyes on the Lord. There's much more to the hymn, including the blessings we receive through receiving Christ's body and blood. Take some time to read the Scripture again and then listen to the song. Focus on the good things God has given you, especially the gift of Christ's perfect life, death on the cross, and resurrection for us. You won't be sorry you did!

[Alive & Breathing - Matt Maher feat. Elle Limebear \(Lyrics\)](#)

Friday, May 7, 2021 - Scripture: John 11:25-26; Song: "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds"

Sunday we will be celebrating the 6th Sunday of Easter and that means in two weeks the Easter season will be over as we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the same Holy Spirit who points us to Jesus. But there's still time for a few more great Easter hymns in our devotions. Today I chose a hymn that we sang in person last Sunday, "Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds." What an awesome thought, to think of all the angels in Heaven praising God because Christ is risen from the dead. In the first stanza, we hear these words, "Christ has triumphed, he is living." In his resurrection, Christ accomplished what he promised to Martha in John 11:25-26: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes me will live, even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Now that He has risen, it's easier to believe this as demonstrated by the difference in the disciples after the resurrection. For example, Peter denied Jesus three times in the High Priest's courtyard the night before he died. Then the same Peter preached boldly about who Jesus was, starting as we will see in two weeks on Pentecost and then over and over through the book of Acts. I pray that you too believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life and then you will live forever even though you die. Wouldn't it be great if not only the Vault of Heaven would resound with the words that Christ has triumphed and is living, but each week in our churches we might hear the same words resounding, and then in our lives, by our actions, we might see the same message lived out? Sunday is Mother's Day in our country, and though I truly believe we should honor our mothers every day for all the sacrifices they have made for us and continue to make, take time to honor them this Sunday. Maybe even consider attending church with them which might

be a great way to thank them for teaching you about Jesus, especially that he has triumphed and is living!

["Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds" Lutheran Service Book LSB #465](#)

Monday, May 10, 2021 - Scripture: Revelation 17:14; Song: "Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing"

It's Monday again and time for another great hymn. In our virtual service yesterday, one of the hymns was "Dear Christians One and All Rejoice" and today's hymn is just a little bit different version of it. It's called "Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing," something that's not always easy to do on Monday. The second line of this Easter hymn helps us understand why we are able to deal with Monday and any other day when we are struggling. It says, "Now is the triumph of our King." On Easter Christ triumphed over death by rising from the dead. The same Lamb who died on the cross in what seemed like a tragic loss, now rules in triumph. Our Scripture verse for today, Revelation 17:14 helps us understand why we can live triumphant: "They will wage war against the lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings- and with him will be his called, chosen, and faithful followers." No matter what you are dealing with today, Covid-19 issues, family issues, job issues, health issues, or whatever else that's tough that comes your way, remind yourself that Christ has triumphed even over death and he will take his faithful, called and chosen followers with him to heaven to celebrate that triumph forever. All these struggles are temporary and because of his ultimate triumph over death he will help us triumph over these temporary struggles as well. Listen to the hymn and hold on to the Scripture, today and every day.

[Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing \[with lyrics for congregations\]](#)

Wednesday, May 12, 2021 - Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13 ; Song: "Faithful God"

I have been leaning heavily on the classic Easter hymns for my devotions for the last five weeks. I am going to take today and Friday off from that emphasis and choose a couple of contemporary songs for our focus. Today's song is "Faithful God by I Am They. During these days of Covid-19 and political unrest and accusations of racism, the devil tempts us to think that God has left us and that he is not involved in our lives. The song's title reminds us that God is faithful and the words of the song support that title well. The group sings that they will sing through fire and thunder, an apt way to describe all the things going on in our lives right now, and then continue "I trust you with my life, even against all odds. I know my story isn't over, You are my faithful God." Part of the reason the group can do that is because of the promises of God's Word as they sing later in the song. Today's Scripture from I Corinthians 10:13 is one of those promises we hang onto when Satan tempts us to think that God isn't faithful." Paul writes: "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful, he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also

provide a way out so that you can endure it.” The song continues, “I am convinced of your love forever, that your promises will hold together,” and today’s Scripture verse is certainly one of those promises. We are convinced of God’s love forever because he was even willing to give up his only Son, Jesus, to die for us and then he raised him from the dead to keep another of those promises. So don’t give in to the temptation of Satan that God isn’t faithful and that’s why we are in the circumstances we are in, with no way out. God provided a way out in Jesus as He promised, and He is faithful.

[Faithful God - I AM THEY \(Lyrics\)](#)

Friday, May 14, 2021 - Scripture: Psalm 55:22; Song: "Cast My Cares"

It’s Friday again and our burdens might be getting us down, whether it’s been a bad week at work, a family illness, family not getting along or something else. We might think we don’t know where to go with our cares or what to do with them except stress out. Today’s contemporary song by Finding Favor, called “Cast My Cares” can help. The group sings to God, “I will cast my cares on you, you’re the anchor of my hope, the only one who’s in control, I will cast my cares on you.” How powerful does that sound as a way to deal with all these cares I’ve laid out. Well, it sounds great to me. It echoes the words of the Psalmist when he writes in Psalm 55:22: “Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you, he will never let the righteous be shaken.” Now you might be thinking, I am certainly not righteous, and you are at least partially right. On your own, you are not and never will be righteous. But Jesus died for those sins and replaced them with his righteousness. So, if you believe that Jesus died for your sins, you are actually righteous in God’s eyes. He sees Jesus’ perfection and not our sins. They are gone, paid for by Jesus’ death. The song continues, “I am finding there’s freedom, when I lay it all on his shoulders.” And that is certainly what the Psalm writer is expressing as well. So, this Friday and every day, if you are feeling overwhelming burdens that you think you can’t deal with anymore, take the advice of Psalm 55 and listen to the song and be encouraged to cast your cares on Him.

[Cast My Cares ~ Finding Favour ~ lyric video](#)

Monday, May 17, 2021 - Scripture: John 17:17; Song: "Dearest Jesus at Your Word"

We are coming to the end of the Easter season and our hymn for today, “Dearest Jesus at Your Word,” kind of summarizes the season. In the beginning of John’s Gospel, Jesus is called the Word made flesh who dwelt among us, and last Thursday we celebrated Ascension when the Word made flesh went back to heaven, physically at least. He is still here with us as he promised in his last words to the disciples before he left, “Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age.” And he left His Word behind, so that we might know who he is and how much he loves us. In our Gospel lesson for yesterday, our Scripture verse for today from John 17:17 reads: “Sanctify them by the

truth, your word is truth”, and then Jesus says in verse 18, “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.” And as we will witness next week on Pentecost, he didn’t leave us alone, he sent the Holy Spirit to keep us in the Word. In these days of pandemic and economic chaos and families following apart, we may think we need our government to rescue us. They can’t and won’t for many reasons. One, because they aren’t perfect and don’t know what we need and 2, because they aren’t concerned about you, no matter what they say, but about what is best for them. We need our God- Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to rescue us. They have given us what we need the most. As the last verse of the hymn says: “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Praise to you and adoration. Grant us what need the most, Your blest Gospel’s consolation. While we here on earth we wait you, til in heaven with praise we greet you.” The Easter season and the resurrection are our guarantee that this will happen. And now we await Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit who will keep us in the Word until that happens. So don’t depend on our government or anything else earthly to rescue you from your troubles. Depend on what we need the most, the Gospel’s consolation, that Christ loved, died, and rose for you!

[Dearest Jesus At Your Word - LW 202 v. 1-4 - Lutheran Worship Christian Church Hymn](#)

Wednesday, May 19, 2021 - Scripture: Romans 8:28; Song: "Every Step of the Way"

It’s Hump day as many folks used to call Wednesday when everybody was still working at their place of business instead of from home like it has been since a year ago March. Then on Monday May 10th we hit the 55% mark on people being vaccinated and Governor Whitmer says in a week and a half that people can go back. Somehow, I have the sense that those who wanted to have already gone back but we’ll see. Today’s song, “Every Step of the Way” by Cade Thompson talks about going back eight years and wondering if we would ever have guessed what things would be like now. I’m not sure many of us would have had the pandemic and the political arrest and the economic issues being the way they are now on our radar. But God did. And as Thompson sings, “I couldn’t see it back then but every step of the way you’ll be, working it out in the way that’s best for me.” It reminds me of our Scripture verse for today from Romans 8:28 when Paul writes: “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who

love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” Notice it’s not what we think is best but what God knows is best. Thompson sings about how things he thought were a tragedy weren’t but were what God used to get us where we needed to be, trusting in him and not ourselves. So, if you frustrated about how things are in your life as you struggle through another hump day, remember God is with us every step of the way. Let this song lift you as you hear again that God is with you every step of the way, working out things in the way that’s best for you. And be encouraged that what you do has meaning.

[Cade Thompson - Every Step of the Way \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)

Monday, May 24, 2021 - Scripture: Acts 2:16-21; Song: "Spirit of the Living God"

Yesterday we celebrated Pentecost together, both virtually and in person. Today and Wednesday to honor of that I have chosen two songs both with the same name but from different eras and with completely tunes and words. They both remind us about who the Holy Spirit and the blessings we receive since he came as a gift to the church on the first Pentecost. The first one for today is probably the more familiar one. We have used during our Worship services, both on Pentecost and at other times. The main words of the first song go like this: “Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me” and then they continue, “Melt Me, Mold Me, Fill me. Spirit of the Living God, fall fresh on me.” And of course, the first place this happened was to the disciples on the first Pentecost. Those present saw fire above their heads as evidence of his physical presence and all there heard the disciples speaking in their own languages. And as often happened after Christ’s ascension. Peter preached. He started by assuring the people there that they were not drunk but were being led by the Spirit. Peter then quoted Joel that this would happen with these words in Acts 2:16: “And in the last days God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy.” The quote from Joel goes on to refer to the things that will happen before the day of the Lord (the last Day) and the quote ends in verse 22 “And it shall come to pass that all who call

upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Then Peter shares Jesus and what he did for all of us that we might be saved. Jesus died for our sins and sent the Holy Spirit that we might believe that and be saved. He will melt us, mold us, and fill us as the song says so that we might share that message with others as Peter did after receiving that same Spirit. You may be wrestling with how difficult it is to share Jesus these days as many in our government endeavor to label that message “hate speech.” It is not our job to change hearts, it is the Holy Spirit’s. He changes ours and as we share that, despite the risk, he will change others as well. Listen to the song and be encouraged and share Jesus as you are able!

[Spirit of the Living God \(Lyrics\)](#)

Wednesday, May 26, 2021 - Scripture: Isaiah 11:2; Song: "Spirit of the Living God"

Today’s song as I said in Monday’s devotion, has the same title as Monday’s. It is again titled “Spirit of the Living God” but with a different theme and tune and words. This one deals with the relationship between Jesus, the Spirit of the Living God” as predicted in Isaiah 11:2, our Scripture verse for today and the 3rd person of the holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, sent to us by Jesus on Pentecost. Earlier in his ministry in John 16, Jesus predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit, the comforter, who, Jesus said, would teach us everything. The song encourages us in that, reminding us we want to know you more and more, we want to hang onto every Word. There are many places where folks try to find answers today, in what our government tries to say is right, in self-help books and more. We are tempted to not listen to God’s Word as Jesus encourages. As Isaiah 11:2 tells us of Jesus: “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.” Both the song and our Scripture refer us to Jesus as the one to turn to when we struggle for help in our struggles. Jesus sent the Spirit to reveal himself to us on the first Pentecost as our Savior from sin

and the only way to eternal life. Look to him and not the answers of the world. They will always fail you, he will not.

[Spirit of the Living GOD Vertical Church Band with lyrics](#)

Friday, May 28, 2021 - Scripture: Isaiah 43:1-2; Song: "Greater"

It is the Friday before Memorial Day weekend and traditionally the beginning of what we think of as summer, though it doesn't officially begin until June 21st. Compared to last year, summer looks to be more like normal than last year. But still, you might be concerned that things might not be as relaxed and peaceful as we hoped. We might feel that Covid protocol and other issues might still control us and keep us from doing what we want. We might feel out of control. Today's song, "Greater" by Mercy Me speaks to all of this. Mercy Me sings: "And every day I wrestle with the voices that tell me that not I'm not right but that's alright." And then it goes on: "Cuz I hear a voice and he calls me redeemed, When others say I'll never be enough. And greater is the one living inside of me, than he who is living in the world." They are referring to the words of Isaiah 43: 1 and 2 where God says: "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by name you are mine.'" Later in the song Mercy Me sings: "There will be days when I lose the battle, but grace says it doesn't matter, the cross won the war, He's greater, He's greater." So, whether it is Covid or something else that is keeping you from enjoying life and the summer ahead that God gave us, remember this. God is greater. He has claimed, you are his. Nothing can keep you from enjoying the blessings won for you on the cross. No matter what the world says, you are God's, claimed by the death of Christ on the cross for you. Enjoy your weekend and spend some time remembering the service members who died to keep you free, free even to worship the God who called and claimed you on the cross through Jesus' death. He is greater than the power of this world who would tell you different.

[MercyMe - Greater - with lyrics \(2014\)](#)

Monday, May 31, 2021 - Scripture: John 15:13; Song: "On This Memorial Day (Armistice Hymn)"

Today is the last day of May, which this year happens to be Memorial Day. I chose this hymn because it is called On This Memorial Day and because it talks about the sacrifice that many made, giving their lives for their country. This hymn, written in 2018, is really about celebrating what is called Armistice day, November 5th when World War I ended. In fact, it was premiered on November 5, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. The sentiments of the two days are similar, both remembering those who gave their lives for freedom. So, it fits well for today. It also fits well because it is not

only about those who gave their lives on behalf of our country. It reminds us clearly that the one to remember, even on a day like today is Christ. As great as the sacrifice of those whose service to our country was, Christ's was even greater. Christ gave up his life not just so that our country might remain free but so that all who believe in him might spend eternity in heaven with his Father. As Jesus put it in our Scripture for today in John 15:13: "Greater love has no one than this; to lay down one's life for one's friends." Those in service to our country did that as did Jesus. But what makes Jesus' sacrifice greater, is that he also gave up his life for his enemies. As Paul puts it in Romans 5: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Listen to today's hymn and remember the great sacrifice made by those in service to our country who died on its behalf, but don't forget Christ's great sacrifice on the cross either. Listen to this haunting and beautiful hymn and thank God for the freedom we have in our country due to those service men who gave their lives and remember also, Christ's sacrifice on the cross that opened heaven to us.

[On This Memorial Day \(Armistice Hymn\)](#)