

Third Sunday after Pentecost
Father's Day
June 21, 2020



Meditation

Nancy Pearcey, Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity, 21st century
"In every historical period, the religious groups that grow most rapidly are those that set believers at odds with the surrounding culture."

The Call

Psalm 86

Incline your ear, O God, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; be gracious to me, O God, for to you do I cry all day long. Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O God, I lift up my soul. For you, O God, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you. There is none like you among the gods, O God, nor are there any works like yours. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Prelude

Sandy Wentzloff

Welcome and News of the Church

Gathering Hymn

"Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"

NCH #18

Guide me O my great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but you are mighty; hold me with your powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain, where the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer, ever be my strength and shield,
Ever be my strength and shield.

When I reach the River Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on heaven's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever sing to you,
I will ever sing to you.

Call to Worship

One: The sun shines more brightly. Its warmth stays with us for so many more hours.

All: So we shake free of our routines.

One: In this new moment, we wander about the wilderness:
Hoping God will open our eyes.
Praying God will make us worthy.
Wanting to grow with God.

All: Let us grow together in the wild ways of our God.

Invocation (*inspired by Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17*)

One: Wild God, you do great and wonderful things.
It's what makes you our God.
There is nothing else in this world like you.
There's nothing else like your love.
Wild God, come and worship with us.
Help us to grow in your love.

Prayer of Confession (*inspired by Genesis 21:8-21*)

One: Abraham was very distressed.
Because his son, Ishmael, was cut out of the community.
Because Sarah could no longer tolerate Hagar.
So Sarah threw her out into the wilderness.
And this is distressing. We are distressed whenever relationships are broken.

All: Still, we confess to God that there are family and friends we have cast out.

One: We also know that in times of crisis, such as Covid-19, some communities are cut off from resources they need for survival: Work, food, healthcare – They suffer disproportionately because of race, or poverty, or lack of health insurance.

All: We confess that all too often we fail to look beyond the boundaries of our own communities.

Words of Assurance

One: The God of Hagar and Sarah, the God of Isaac and Ismael continues to call us into community across boundaries, providing water in the desert and the promise of a future. Let us believe that grace is working in our lives, Opening hearts, restoring justice, making all things new in Christ Jesus.

Sung Response *"Blessed Be the Tie That Binds"*

**All: Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
The sharing of a common life is like to that above.**

**Before our God we come and pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our care.**

**We share each other's woes, each other's burdens bear,
and from our hearts the strength will flow for justice made and shared.**

Scripture

Genesis 21:8-21 • Matthew 10:24-39

Genesis 21:8-21

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac." The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave

woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."

So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.

And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Matthew 10:24-39

"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Special Music

"A New Hallelujah"

Shannon Hruska

Sermon

"Growing in the Wilderness"

Pastor Dennis

A woman was going to the grocery store one day and she couldn't help but notice a father with a young toddler. The father had the boy in the shopping cart and was going through the store grocery shopping. The reason the woman couldn't help but notice was because the little boy was screaming at the top of his lungs. As she went by, she heard the father say, "Freddie, it's going to be OK. Just remain calm and don't get upset." The woman went through the store a little bit longer and when she got in the check-out lane, she saw that she was right behind the father and the little boy. She heard the father say again, "Freddie, we are in the check-out lane, we're almost there, just stay calm, we'll get in the car and be home soon." The woman made her way out to her car in the parking lot and lo and behold her car was right next to theirs. She heard the father say to the little boy again, "It's OK, Freddie, we're getting in the car, we're going home, just a few more minutes and we will be home." The woman said to the father, "Sir, I just have to commend you for how patient you are with little Freddie." The father said, "His name is Patrick. My name is Freddie!"

The trials of a father! Trying to do the requirements of the day, shopping, and being a good care giver and loving father to a child. I remember being in the same situation as Freddie. When my daughter was born I would do my part in taking care of her and doing the grocery shopping. I was fortunate in that I did not have the crying child. I had the quiet cutie that everyone wanted to see, because they could not believe that a father could be caring for a child who was nestled in the baby seat in the grocery cart and the child was not crying. Remember that was over 40 years ago.

I was very fortunate to be in a relationship where both parents were ordained ministers and had decided to share one call half time each. In doing so, we could alternate days of work and parenting thus avoiding the need for child care. Having the opportunity to teach, every day, our values and our faith before she had to go out and face the world of pre-school!

I enjoyed every moment (ok, almost every moment) that I spent in parks, on jungle gyms, playing pirate on the ship in the park, dressing up in crazy costumes and carrying the little passenger on the back of my bike in order to get her to go to sleep for a nap. This bike routine happened also at midnight at times because she was still wide awake hours after mom and dad were ready to be fast asleep dreaming of peaceful places where one could nestle in and enjoy the calm and quiet rest of life before a child!

You see, she slept all night her first night home from the hospital, and I thought this is going to be easy. But then she didn't do that again for two years! Thus the bike rides, and midnight rides in the car.

I remember getting up in the mornings and fixing a nutritious breakfast of cereal and milk, giving her a choice of a pony tail or pig tails, then walking her to school, which was only a few blocks away on my way to work. I was the morning person in the family!

Raising a child was one of the best things I have ever experienced. And the joy continues today with that daughter and with a granddaughter. Thus, I cannot imagine the pain and heartbreak of making Abram's decision to send one of his son's into the desert where he, along with his mother, would surely die after a few days when the bread and water ran out.

How could a father do that? How could a stepmother demand it and be at ease with the decree, having known the joy and satisfaction of having her own child who was such a miracle. Giving birth in her old age as a promise from God.

And though I cannot understand Abram's decision, I do understand that this story in Genesis is not about Abram, Sari, Hagar, or Ishmael.

This story is about God. A wonderfully gracious God who heard the cries of a baby. A baby lying under a bush, crying from hunger and thirst. A child of God crying for its life. A baby separated from its mother. Alone. Dying.

God heard the cries of Hagar, sitting a bow's shot away so as not to hear the cries of her child. She knew her precious, little, helpless baby would die before her. She could not bear the situation in which she found herself.

Yet, at the worst point in both lives, God speaks. "I have heard the cries of the child." "I have provided a well full of water. Go and find new life for my children: the baby and you.

Here is a God who is constantly observing the actions, good and bad, of people who make decisions everyday based on their own needs. Even sending innocent ones to death. Killing for their own satisfaction. Killing out of their own fears and greed. And when these people of God sink to their lowest, God hears the cries of the downtrodden and steps in with new life.

This story this story in Genesis is not about Abram, Sari, Hagar, or Ishmael—this story is about radical grace.

Each of us has found ourselves at times in a desperate situation when we did not on our own know the direction to go or what to do. We have experienced exhaustion from endless turmoil, the daily challenge to provide food, clothing, medical care, and quality time with the children with whom we have been blessed.

It is at those times, when there was no immediate grace from the people who demanded our money or our time, God steps in with a radical grace that shows us a way. A radical grace that gives us the resources and ability to go forward one day at a time.

What a challenging time to be a father. A time of pandemic caused unemployment. A time of social unrest. A time of seeing our children being killed. Being killed for no justifiable reason. A time of seeing sadness, sorrow, illness and dying from a virus.

Dedication Prayer

Grow these gifts in your love, Wild God.
Bless our offerings, our hearts and our hopes in your love
To make us worthy of your work in this world.
Fill these gifts and each of us with your goodness. Amen.

Sending Hymn *"You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore"*

NCH #173

You have come down to the lakeshore seeking neither the wise nor the wealthy, But only asking for me to follow.

Refrain: *O Jesus, you have looked into my eyes; kindly smiling, you've called out my name. On the sand I have abandoned my small boat; now with you I will seek other seas.*

**You need my hands, my exhaustion, working love for the rest of the weary
A love that's willing to go on loving. Refrain**

You who have fished other waters; you the longing of souls that are yearning as loving friend, you have come to call me. Refrain

Benediction

Beloved in Christ, into your hands God gives strength and worth.
Take another strip of cloth to weave into and to mend the broken relationships in the body of Christ. Trust that this wild world is full of God's steadfast love. For you, dear servant, were made for this love.
Go in this deep peace.

Postlude

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Sandy Wentzloff



Scholarship Fund

Students attending post-secondary education are encouraged to apply for a Mission Board Scholarship.

Applications are available on the table by the north entry door and can be given to any Mission Board Member, mailed in or turned into the secretary's office by July 15th.

Remember in Prayer: All men, fathers and families on this Father's Day, Bill Cowell, Eunice Gasow, and Aggie Schue. We pray for others who have been ill or are home bound and those at Oak Terrace and Golden Hearts. We pray for health and healing for all people everywhere. We pray with anticipation for the day we can all gather again with our church family. Pray for the ministries of our church. Pray for those serving in the military and for our local and national leaders during these trying times.

If you have a prayer request or would like to receive a call from Pastor Dennis call his office at 237-2595 (leave a private voice mail) or his cell 763-258-3371.

Giving our Gifts to God:

Tithes and Offerings can be sent to Gaylord United Church of Christ P.O. Box 385 Gaylord, MN 55334 or dropped by the church office on Wednesday between 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Pastor Dennis is usually in the office each Wednesday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. He can be reached at the office, 237-2595 (private voice mail) or his cell: 763-258-3371.

E-mail: dmckee545@gmail.com

Website at listen2god.org

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- ❖ You can view the Service online by Friday or Saturday each week. Click on the link to view Service at: <https://listen2god.org/weekly-message/>
 - ❖ Weekly devotional available each Tuesday at: www.listen2God.org/worship/devotionals

Happy
Father's
Day!

*“The LORD bless you and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you; the LORD
turn his face toward you and give you peace.”*

Numbers 6:24-26

