

12th Sunday after Pentecost  
August 28, 2022  
“Go to Jesus outside the camp!”  
(Hebrews 13:12-16)”  
By Rev. Ed Weber

“Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today’s text for this 12th Sunday after Pentecost is from the final chapter of Hebrews, Hebrews 13:12-16.

**“12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. 13 Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. 14 For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. 15 Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”**

In these last four weeks, we have read through the last three chapters of the book of Hebrews. And you may have noticed that there has been a constant theme of Christians being on the move.

In chapter 11, from the cloud of witnesses, we were given principal examples of heroes of the faith like Abraham and Moses. We heard how Abraham and Sarah were told by God to leave their home and travel to the promised land that God would give them. They lived as pilgrims in tents throughout their lives as examples to us that our sojourn here in this world is temporary. Our true fatherland is the promised land of heaven.

And they were tested to trust God that even though they were past the age of childbearing, God would give them a child and through his line of descent would come the Messiah. Abraham was justified by faith.

By faith, Moses esteemed **“the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” (Hebrews 11:26)**. Again, He kept his eyes on the heavenly reward, as he was called to lead the Israelites from captivity, saved by the sprinkling of blood on the Passover and rescued from the Egyptians as they crossed the Red Sea on dry land.

Our forefathers in the Old Testament ran the race of faith and gave us great examples to follow. So that, we too are reminded that we are in a race of faith, in our earthly pilgrimage, to **“run with endurance the race that is set before us, with our eyes focused on Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith. He finished the race for us, “who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:2)**

And last week, we heard that God makes sure that we run unencumbered with the weight of sin by His loving chastisement (Hebrews 12:3-11). God refines our faith, so that we **“lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us” (Hebrews 12:1)**, through our daily repentance. And after we are chastened, God forgives us our sins as our race of faith daily brings us

**“24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12:24)**

So, there is movement in the Christian life, in the race of faith, bringing us ever closer to trust in Jesus and closer to the prize **“we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken” (Hebrews 12:28).**

And so in the concluding chapter of Hebrews we are on the move again. **“let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.”**

We are called to go to Jesus - “Outside the camp”. What camp are we talking about here? Well, a camp is a base of strength and protection where like-minded people gather together with a common goal.

In football, teams are breaking their training camps this week, having played some preseason games and are now getting ready for the start of the regular season. Each team has a philosophy and training that they have received in their camps that they believe will help them reach and win the Super Bowl.

In politics, candidates that are running for office have mobile offices and places of gathering called camps. You’ll hear news commentators talk about “Biden’s camp or Trump’s camp”. Again, there are distinct philosophies and shared beliefs that all who are in their respective camps agree upon and promote. There are distinct Republican and Democrat platforms. And the camps highlight these differences sometimes with unfortunate “mudslinging”.

But what about the camp in our text that Christians are told “to go forth from”?

This camp is inside the city – the city of Jerusalem. It is the camp which was established by God in the Old Testament with the sacrificial system of the animals for the forgiveness of sins through the coming sacrifice of the Messiah. It was the temporary, shadow of the perfect sacrifice to come of the Messiah.

This camp by necessity would come to an end with the coming of the Messiah. It would be time to break camp and follow the Messiah. But, that didn't happen. The Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah and continued the sacrificial system. In fact, they treated Jesus as a common criminal and took Him outside the camp and killed Him.

Outside the Jewish camp, outside the city, the sacrificial remains of the animals whose blood was shed were burned. Leviticus chapter 24 tells of how Moses and the people took one who blasphemed God outside the camp and stoned him. So, the Jewish camp considered Jesus a criminal who blasphemed God, rejected Him and took Him outside the city and killed Him.

But to Jesus, to camp Jesus, outside the city we are called to go forth. We are called to reject the shadow of the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament sacrificial system and go to the fulfillment - Jesus.

So we are told in Hebrews 10:

**“11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”**

There are two camps in this world – Camp Jesus and everything else. Camp Jesus is the camp of the “done its” – those who put their faith in Jesus who said “it is finished” and forgave the sins of all people once and for all. All other camps are the “doing it” camps. Whether they are the Jewish unbelievers or present day the works righteous camps of those who believe that Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough. **“Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines.” (Hebrews 13:9)** We are warned in today's epistle.

If you believe that you are not saved by grace alone, then you are not in Jesus' camp. Jesus calls us to come to Him, to His camp. It seems that there is but sadness outside the city – a man crucified on the cross. But there is where we receive grace for our all our sins. In Jesus' camp, He graciously extends to all who come to Him the blessings of His sacrifice through His Word and Sacraments.

Where is camp Jesus? Wherever Christians gather around the Word that is taught correctly and the Sacraments that are administered rightly so say our confessions. We are gathered here this morning at Camp Jesus in Immanuel Lutheran Church to hear His Word. Here Jesus also gives us the washing of our sins in our baptisms and unites us not only with His death, but with His resurrection. For outside the city, three days later, Jesus proved that He was the long-awaited Messiah by conquering death and rising again!

At Camp Jesus, we are strengthened with His forgiveness as we eat and drink His very body and blood that was given and shed for us on the cross. We hear His promises today as we heard in the children's message:

**“I will never leave you nor forsake you.” 6 So we may boldly say:  
“The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?” (Hebrews 13:5-6)**

And we are then strengthened by Jesus to bear His reproach, carry His cross and love others as we have first been loved by Him.

**“Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.”**

So there is movement of God's people from His camp of forgiveness to the world who still needs to know Him as the true Messiah. He has not changed. Though the world changes and many false teachings arise. Jesus doesn't.

**“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)**

He is the same loving God who “yesterday” came as the incarnate Son of God and was sacrificed for you. He is the same loving God who today has forgiven you through His Word and Sacraments, and He is the same loving God who has prepared for you and all believers forever His eternal home in Heaven. And then

when we enter this true city, then our pilgrimage will end and eternal joy and perfect happiness will begin. Amen.

**The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your heart and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**