



Martyrdom:

Sacrifices of Love

Mark 6:1-29



West Richmond Church of the Brethren

7612 Wanyamala Road, Henrico, Virginia 23229-4239

804-288-6439 804-282-4408 (fax) wrcob@wrcob.org www.wrcob.org

February 4, 2024

5th Sunday after Epiphany

Welcome

Prelude

Alleluia

arr. Adrienne Potter

GIVE PRAISE TO GOD

* Call to Worship

<http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/>

One: The prophets of old spoke of God's justice, when it was unwelcome. Who will hear their message?

Many: **We will listen and we will hear!**

One: Responding to God's call, Jesus traveled, preaching and teaching all who would listen. Who will hear his message?

Many: **We will listen and we will hear!**

One: Christ sent out disciples two by two, to spread the good news in any place that would welcome them. Who will hear their message?

Many: **We will listen and we will hear!**

One: God's prophets are among us still, around the world and in these pews. Who will hear their message?

Many: **We will listen and we will hear!**

* Opening Prayer

* Opening Song *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship* # 25 VT

Verse 1:

Brethren, we have met to worship; sisters, let us praise our God.

Will you pray with all your power? Will you hear and preach the word?

All is vain unless the Spirit of the holy One comes down.
Christians, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.

Verse 2:

Kindred, will you come and help us? Moses' fam'ly aided him.
Will you help the trembling mourners who are struggling hard with sin?
Tell them all about the Savior. Tell them that he will be found.
Christians, pray, and holy manna will be showered all around.

Verse 3:

Is there here a trembling jailer, seeking grace and filled with fears?
Is there here a weeping Mary, pouring forth a flood of tears?
Brethren, join your cries to help them; sisters, let your prayers abound!
Pray, oh pray, that holy manna will be scattered all around.

Verse 4:

Let us love our God supremely, let us love each other, too.
Let us love and pray for sinners till our God makes all things new.
Christ will call us home to heaven, at his table we'll sit down.
Christ will gird himself and serve us with sweet manna all around.

CELEBRATE GOD'S FAMILY

Time with Our Children

New Testament Reading

Mark 6:1-13 NRSVUE

6 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² 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! ³ 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. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown and among their own kin and in their own house." ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few

sick people and cured them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief.

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

Moment in Black Brethren History

Brethren Encyclopedia

John T. Lewis (1835-1906) was born in Carroll County, Maryland and was a freeman. And in 1853 he joined the Dunker (now known as the Church of the Brethren) congregation at the Meadow Branch meetinghouse. One of the people he worked for as a coachman was Jervis Langdon, Mark Twain's father-in-law. The two became friends and some believe that Lewis was the model for Jim in Twain's book *Huckleberry Finn*.

Mark Twain called John "the most picturesque of men" and "an implacable Dunker-Baptist." John was one of the few black members of the Brethren in the years before the Civil War, having united with the Pipe Creek congregation in Maryland in 1853 when he was eighteen years old.

Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) had many reasons to admire Lewis, his friend for more than thirty years. Lewis had served as coachman for Clemens' father-in-law and later was a tenant farmer at Quarry Farm near Elmira, NY, where the famous writer spent many summers. On August 23, 1877, Lewis saved the lives of Clemens' sister-in-law, Ida Langdon, her young daughter Julia, and Nora, a nurse, when a runaway horse carried their carriage dangerously downhill toward a turn in the road.

Clemens, in a letter to his friend, William Dean Howells, described how Lewis, who was coming up the hill with a load of manure, “gathered his vast strength and ... seized the gray horse’s bit as he plunged by and fetched him up standing!”

The rewards that John Lewis received for his courageous act enabled him to pay off his debts and to help his father, who still lived in Maryland. In a letter of thanks for the gifts received, Lewis said, “Inasmuch as divine providence saw fit to use me as an instrument for the saving of those presshious lives, the honner conferd upon me was greater than the feat performed.” That sentence, wrote Mark Twain, raised his letter to “the dignity of literature.”

Lewis, in preparing his own obituary, observed that he had long been cut off from the church, but he wrote, “I have tried to be faithful the New Testament and order of the Brethren.”

Song

Over My Head

594 VT

Over My Head by John L. Bell

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Refrain:

*Over my head, I hear music in the air;
over my head, I hear music in the air;
over my head, I hear music in the air;
there must be a God somewhere.*

Verse 1:

Leader: Oh, when the world is silent,
All: I hear music in the air;
Leader: oh, when the world is silent,
All: I hear music in the air;
Leader: oh, when the world is silent,
**All: I hear music in the air,
there must be a God somewhere.**

Refrain

Verse 2:

Leader: And when I’m feeling lonely,
All: I hear music in the air,
Leader: and when I’m feeling lonely,

All: I hear music in the air,
Leader: and when I'm feeling lonely,
All: I hear music in the air,
there must be a God somewhere.

Refrain

Verse 3:

Leader: Now when I think on Jesus,
All: I hear music in the air,
Leader: now when I think on Jesus,
All: I hear music in the air,
Leader: now when I think on Jesus,
All: I hear music in the air,
there must be a God somewhere.

Refrain

Pastoral Prayer

WORSHIP IN GIVING

Thoughts on Giving

Mark 8:35-36

For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?

Special Music *The Glory of the Lord/Total Praise* Gaither/Smallwood

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LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED

Scripture Lesson

Mark 6:14-29 NRSVUE

¹⁴ King Herod heard of it, for Jesus's name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him."

¹⁵ But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet,

like one of the prophets of old.” ¹⁶ But when Herod heard of it, he said, “John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.”

¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, because Herod had married her. ¹⁸ For John had been telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” ¹⁹ And Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to kill him. But she could not, ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹ But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. ²² When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests, and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.” ²³ And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.” ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, “What should I ask for?” She replied, “The head of John the baptizer.” ²⁵ Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” ²⁶ The king was deeply grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Song

Ancient Words

Lynn DeShazo

Ancient Words by Lynn DeShazo

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Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world,
They resound with God’s own heart
Oh, let the Ancient words impart.

Words of Life, words of Hope
Give us strength, help us cope
In this world, where e'er we roam
Ancient words will guide us Home.

Chorus:

*Ancient words ever true Changing me, and changing you.
We have come with open hearts Oh let the ancient words impart.*

Holy words of our Faith
Handed down to this age.
Came to us through sacrifice
Oh heed the faithful words of Christ.

Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world,
They resound with God's own heart
Oh, let the Ancient words impart.

Chorus

We have come with open hearts
Oh let the ancient words impart.

Sermon "Martyrdom: Sacrifices of Love"

GO IN GOD'S NAME

* **Song** *Take My Life, and Let It Be* #759 VT

Verse 1:

Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise, let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Verse 2:

Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee, swift and beautiful for thee.

Verse 3:

Take my intellect and use ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.

Take my lips, and let them be
filled with messages from thee, filled with messages from thee.

Verse 4:

Take my silver and my gold; ot a mite would I withhold.
Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine, it shall be no longer mine.

Verse 5:

Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee, ever, only, all for thee.

*** Benediction**

Postlude

Ezekiel Saw the Wheel

arr. J. Jefferson Cleveland

* Please stand as able and led



Ministers	All Members
Pastor.....	David Whitten
Minister of Music.....	Vanessa Morton
Worship Leader.....	Thoko Lipato
Children’s Time.....	Sarah Hartman
Special Music.....	Vanessa Morton
Flautist.....	Sarah Hartman
Guitarist.....	David Whitten
Dir. of Media & Tech.....	Kevin Beers