

Sermon for The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Date: August 11, 2019

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Isaiah 7:10-17

Epistle Reading: 1 John 5:18-21

Gospel Reading: John 1:6-17



Sermon Title: The Apostles' Creed – The Second Article

Introit: Psalm 85:8-9, 12-13; Antiphon: Psalm 85:7

Hymns:

LSB 481 – I Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives

LSB 398 – Hail to the Lord's Anointed (v.1,2,4)

LSB 786 – Lord of all Good (v.1,3)

LSB 549 – All Hail the Power of Jesus Name

Liturgy:

Divine Service: Special (*With Excerpts from Divine Service IV*)



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Grace to you, and peace in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want you to think for a moment about what a hero is. A hero is a person who saves others. Often it is through some extraordinary action, something that people would not normally do, often times at the risk to their own life or safety. In the attacks on 9/11/2001 several people died. Some because of the terrorist attacks. Some fighting the terrorists. Some trying to rescue people suffering from the attacks. Some of those included those police and firefighters that ran into the World Trade Center towers to save people in those burning buildings, and who with the victims died when the buildings collapsed. They are heroes.

Soldiers are heroes when they risk their lives to defend the freedoms we enjoy in our country. We give special honors and medals to those who conduct themselves with great valor and honor without regard for themselves or their own safety to save and protect others. We give special respect to those who gave their lives defending this nation, and this nation's security.

Heroes are too often in too short a supply. We long for heroes. Men who exhibit true honor, valor, integrity and honesty. Men who use their strength to defend and protect those who are weaker around them. There is an ancient story about a man named Beowulf. That story has been retold over and over. It has been made into a movie several times. What is sad is how often those retelling the tale fail to convey the true meaning in that story.

Beowulf is a man of incredible power and strength who comes to the aid of a king whose kingdom is in collapse and utter despair because a monster named Grendel that is attacking and killing people, and there is nothing anyone can do to make him stop. He attacks over and over, again and again, and each time more people die. Futility has overcome the people as they all wait for the inevitable and horrible death that is coming for each of them. Beowulf hears of this trouble and travels to the afflicted kingdom. He speaks to the king, who is disrespected by his people and his counselors, because he is considered weak and unable to defend his people.

Beowulf never shows disrespect to the king, instead he honors him and defends the king's honor to all who would question it. Beowulf eventually fights and defeats Grendel. In doing so he earned the right to take the throne away from the king. Beowulf returns and continues to honor the king even when others tell him to take the king's place. The king in gratitude rewards Beowulf with great honors and riches. Beowulf takes only what is fair for the task he has performed and nothing more.

The story of Beowulf is a story about what makes a man a real hero. It is a story about honor, valor, integrity and honesty. It is a story that must be read, because all of the movies fail to convey the very point the story was written to teach. It is a story that every boy should read, to learn something of what it means to be a real man.

The second article of the Apostles' Creed states that Jesus is "our Lord." Do we think of Jesus as our hero? We generally don't think of Jesus as a hero. We don't call Jesus a hero but Jesus is, without a doubt, the best example of masculine strength this world has ever seen.

Jesus is certainly a hero in that He rescues and saves us from eminent peril, danger and sin's affect which can only finish in death. What greater danger is there than being cast through the gates of Hell to eternal condemnation? What greater peril is there than your approaching death?

The Large Catechism states that to call Jesus our Lord is the same as calling Jesus our Redeemer. The One who paid our fine, paid our debt, so that we would not be subjects of Satan but rather children of God. Jesus is our Redeemer, our Savior, our Liberator. Jesus is our Lord.

I suppose the reason we generally do not call Jesus our hero is because I think there is one major difference between a hero and our Lord. A hero doesn't save a person eternally. Jesus, as our Lord, is not like a fireman who rescues us from the flames of Hell and then just goes on about His business, and we about ours. Jesus takes us under His wing.¹ He continues to provide and care for all that we need, all of our lives.

That gives us a glimpse at what the end of time looks like. He is more like a fireman who rescues a child, and then adopts that child and makes them a member of his family. Jesus rescues us from the flames of Hell certainly, but more than that He makes us a child of God.² He makes us His own to live under Him in His kingdom.³

That is why Jesus is called Lord and not just hero. Jesus didn't just save us. He defeated the super-enemies of: sin, death, and the power of the devil. He conquered those things that endanger us. Having completed that task, He was exulted. Not just to be given special honors and a medal, but to be enthroned. To reign as King and Lord of His people forever. He now sits at the right-hand of the Father, as both

1 Matthew 23:37

2 John 1:12

3 Luther's Small Catechism

steward of all creation, and Lord over all that is. He is also our Mediator between us and the Father. He declares us clean and saved.

After Jesus said, “It is finished!” there was a parade of events. Jesus descended into Hell to proclaim His victory in the very heart of the enemies territory. That was the ultimate insult to the ruler of that dark place. To walk into the basilica of Beelzebub and declare him beaten. Then Jesus rose and walked among the people proclaiming His victory and their salvation from slavery to that dark master. Then He ascends into Heaven to assume His position of reigning dominion and power, over all things. He now sits in the place of highest honor for all eternity as the God-Man. Not just the Divine nature of Jesus, but also the Man Jesus. The Man who came to die for you and me.

Jesus is Lord. What does that really mean? It means two things:

1. Jesus is Lord. That is Law. I belong to Him. I serve Him. I am His property. I am under His orders, policies and rules.
2. Jesus in Lord. That’s the Gospel. Jesus reigns over us, so that He can make us holy, make us pure, strengthen and comfort all who live under Him. We live under Him so that He can grant us His gifts. We live under Him so that He can shield and protect us. We serve Him in everlasting innocents, righteousness and blessedness.

You see “Jesus is my Lord” goes far beyond “Jesus is my hero.” We are born in a sense without a Lord. We are conceived as enemies of God. Other things dominate and threaten us. We belonged to sin, idols, Satan and certainly we belonged to death. These things tyrannized and terrorized our lives.

Until Jesus. Then it is no longer true. In the water of Holy Baptism you are marked, branded, as one redeemed by Christ. Now you have a Lord, a Lord of Life. He became your Lord when He rescued you and saved you, through His innocent suffering and death, by pouring out His holy precious blood.

Is Jesus your hero? Certainly He should be that, but He is much much more than just a hero. He is your Lord, your Savior, your King.

Amen.