

Sermon followed by Service

May 19, 2024

1 Corinthians

What is the hardest test you've had? ... the hardest question you've had to answer? Maybe you think of that spelling bee or the test on multiplying and dividing fractions. Or maybe you're already looking ahead - what do I want to do with my life? I wish I could tell you the tests and questions get easier, but that's not always the case - Surgery or no surgery? Treatment or no treatment? And those can be the easy tests and questions. Already you're facing some of the toughest tests and questions - what do you do when you're alone, alone with your temptations? What do you do when you're alone with your friends and their temptations? And then there's the final - How do you answer when God calls?

*Ice-breaker - What is the hardest test you've had?
... the hardest question you've had to answer?*

For some questions, some tests you can go to school. You can learn to be a writer, a pharmacist, an engineer, a pastor, a teacher. For some questions and tests you pick a role model and you learn how to husband, how to wife, how to raise children, how to work. In school and out of school, you learn the wonders and ways of God's world and how to be a blessing and make this world a better place with God. And all of that is great! And none of us should ever think we're done with that learning.

How do you model - for your peers and for the next generations - ongoing growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus?

What is your preferred way to learn and grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ?

How could St. John help you with that? What would you like to see for you (and others) in a St. John Adult Spiritual Growth plan?

That's right. You might not want to hear this. In this world, we don't graduate out of questions and out of tests; we graduate into more questions, more tests, and sometimes they're harder questions and harder tests. For some of those tests we go to the doctor, and for some of those questions we go to the funeral home director. Because no matter how smart you get; no matter how many tests you pass and answers you know; no matter how much money you make ... sooner or later we won't be able to pass the tests and the only questions left will be questions of guilt and punishment, fear and hope, life or death, heaven or hell, in other words - what's next?

And then the wisdom of this world will fail you. Science doesn't know the answer to "what's next?" Medicine can't stop "what's next." Logic might come close to part of the answer. We look around at this world and we see bodies torn up by disease, families torn up by sin, a world torn up by selfishness.

And what's the logical answer to "what's next?" Why should we expect any better after we die? We look around and we see plenty proof that God isn't too happy with this world. So what should we expect from an angry God - something better than life here? Heaven? That doesn't make sense, does it?

So the wisdom of this world turns from logic to feelings and wishes and wants. The wise of the world try to kid themselves. "There is no God; there is no "what's next;" and if there is, if I live a good life, if I'm better than my neighbors, God should be happy with me. And if he's not, he'll have to answer to me." We might not think ourselves that "smart." But there are times we put the wisdom of the world in place of God's wisdom, times we put our smarts in place of God's smarts. Like the times we think we know better than our parents and we don't have to do what they say. Or the times we think our feelings are more right than God's Word ... or that Christ and his church should take second place after we take care of ourselves and our fun and games.

Who or what has first place in your life? How does it show?

(Who or what has first place on your calendar or credit card statements?)

I'll put it simply - God doesn't have a place for that kind of wisdom in his house - his house in heaven or his house here. When some angels thought their way better than God's way - to

use school talk - he expelled them. When Adam and Eve thought they knew better than God, what did it get them and us? Look around - every day we see death in the news and most every time I go home I pass by grave markers of death on the side of the road.

The wisdom of this world can't change that. So we don't settle for the wisdom of the world. And when you graduate and take your next steps in life, please don't settle for the wisdom of the world. The wisdom of the world can't make you wise enough to pass the tests and to answer the questions that are coming your way.

But God has a secret for you. God has the answer for sin and guilt, death and the devil; he has the answer for "what's next?", the answer that gives life. That answer is Jesus. Jesus took the sin test for you and he passed - sinless and holy. Jesus took the Commandment test for you; he kept them all perfectly and passed. At the same time, Jesus took the devil test; the devil tried to tempt Jesus, tried to trip him up, but Jesus refused and he passed. Then Jesus took the death test. God loaded Jesus with your sin and mine and made Jesus pay the wages of sin. And he did it! He paid for your sin and mine! With a shout he finished the test - "**It is finished.**" Dead on the cross it looked like he flunked, but on Easter Jesus showed - he passed; he perfectly passed; he passed the death test and he lives.

What does it mean for you that Jesus passed his tests?

The sin test, the commandment test, the devil test, and the death test - Jesus took all those tests for you. He passed them all for you. He gives you his grade and his diploma. And what do we have to pay? What do we have to do? Nothing! With Jesus, you have passed the sin test. With Jesus, you have passed the commandment test. With Jesus, you have passed the death test and you get to live ... you get to live forever with Jesus in heaven. In heaven ... are you tired of tests, tired of always having to have more answers? In heaven, there won't be any tests - you already passed! In heaven, you won't have to come up with more answers; in heaven you'll have a new mind that knows all God's answers.

What does it mean for you that Jesus passed your tests?

What do you look forward to with your new mind?

You don't have to wait for heaven to use that new mind. The Spirit - that tells you the secret of Jesus - is giving you a piece of his mind. Not just the piece of God's mind that says: "No," but the piece of Christ's mind that says: "Peace." Not just the piece of God's mind that says: "Do," but the piece of Christ's mind that says: "I've got it done for you." Not just the piece of God's mind that says: "Watch out" but the piece of Christ's mind that says: **"Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and everything you need will be given to you as well."**

The Holy Spirit is giving you a piece of Jesus' mind. When your mind has you thinking that sin is good and that God's

way is hard ... when life has you worrying and death has you fearing ... when you don't know what to do with your life ... remember you don't have to settle for the wisdom of the world. You have the secrets of God, the wisdom of God; you get to think with the mind of Christ. Thinking with the mind of Christ, we can say "no" to sin that leads to trouble. Thinking with the mind of Christ, we can say "yes" to God who blesses. Thinking with the mind of Christ, we know how to face trouble: **"I can do all things through him who gives me strength."** Thinking with the mind of Christ, we know how to face need: **"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."** Thinking with the mind of Christ, we know how to face death: **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."** And thinking with the mind of Christ we know what to do with life - **"whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."**

How do you re-set to think with the mind of Christ?

So what is the hardest test you'll face? What is the toughest question you'll ever have to answer? With the mind of Christ, you know God's secrets; you know God's answers. Think with the mind of Christ and you'll be ready for whatever test and question comes your way. Amen.

May 18 & 19, 2024

SERVICE OF THE WORD

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we celebrate Pentecost and praise God for the work of his Holy Spirit. May the Wisdom of the Spirit grow in our graduates and all of us as we step forward in our lives with Christ!

OPENING HYMN

"Holy Spirit, Light Divine"

Hymn 593

Holy Spirit, light divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
chase the gloom of night away, turn the darkness into day.

Holy Spirit, love divine, cleanse this guilty heart of mine;
in your mercy pity me, from sin's bondage set me free.

Holy Spirit, joy divine, cheer this saddened heart of mine;
fill me with your heav'nly peace, let it grow and still increase.

Holy Spirit, pow'r divine, dwell within this heart of mine;
cast down ev'ry idol throne, reign supreme and reign alone.

Holy Spirit, fill my heart, cleanse my life in ev'ry part;
your own temple I would be now and for eternity.

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will. Amen.

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

HYMN

“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest”

Hymn 586 vs. 1, 4, 6-7

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, and make our hearts your place of rest;
come with your grace and heav’nly aid,
and fill the hearts which you have made.

Your light to ev’ry thought impart, and shed your love in ev’ry heart;
the weakness of our mortal state with deathless might invigorate.

Teach us to know the Father, Son, and you, from both, as Three in One
that we your name may ever bless and in our lives the truth confess.

Praise we the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, with them One,
and may the Son on us bestow the gifts that from the Spirit flow!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may live and grow in the grace and the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“ ‘In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

A MEDLEY OF SCHOOL THEME VERSES

M: Do not be anxious about anything,

**C: but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
present your requests to God.** (Philippians 4:6 ~ 2016-2017)

M: I have told you these things,

C: so that in me you may have peace.

M: In this world you will have trouble.

C: But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33 ~ 2017-2018)

M: So do not fear, for I am with you;

C: do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

M: I will strengthen you and help you;

C: I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10 ~ 2018-2019)

M: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,

C: and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28 ~ 2019-2020)

Refrain

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.

When I feel afraid, think I've lost my way. Still You're there right beside me.

And nothing will I fear as long as You are near. Please be near me to the end.

Refrain

Now I will not forget Your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering.

Jesus, be my guide, and hold me to Your side, I will love You to the end.

Nothing will I fear as long as You are near. Please be near me to the end.

Refrain

And a light unto my path. You're the light unto my path.

M: “I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,

C: **“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.”** (Jeremiah 29:11~ 2020-2021)

M: Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength.

C: **They will soar on wings like eagles;**

M: they will run and not grow weary,

C: **they will walk and not be faint.** (Isaiah 40:31~ 2021-2022)

M: Therefore go and gather disciples from all nations

C: **by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.** (Matthew 28:19 ~ 2022-2023)

M: I can do all things

C: **through Christ who strengthens me.** (Philippians 4:13 ~ 2023-2024)

SCHOOL CHILDREN SING

“By Faith”

Hymn 868 vs. 1, 3, 5

*By faith we see the hand of God in the light of creation’s grand design,
in the lives of those who prove his faithfulness, who walk by faith and not by sight.*

*By faith the prophets saw a day when the longed-for Messiah would appear
with the pow’r to break the chains of sin and death
and rise triumphant from the grave.*

Refrain

*We will stand as children of the promise;
we will fix our eyes on him, our soul’s reward.
Till the race is finished and the work is done,
we’ll walk by faith and not by sight.*

*By faith this mountain shall be moved and the pow’r of the gospel shall prevail,
for we know in Christ all things are possible for all who call upon his name.*

Refrain

GOSPEL

John 14:23–27

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

“All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord”

Hymn 585

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord! May all your graces be outpoured
on each believer’s mind and heart; your fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of your light you gather and in faith unite
your Church from ev’ry land and tongue:
this to your praise, O Lord our God, be sung. Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, holy Light, guide divine, and cause the Word of life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright and call him Father with delight.
From ev’ry error keep us free; let none but Christ our master be
that we in living faith abide, in him, our Lord, with all our might confide.
Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, holy Fire, comfort true, grant us the will your work to do
and in your service to abide; let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by your pow’r prepare each heart,
and to our weakness strength impart
that bravely here we may contend,
through life and death to you, our Lord, ascend. Alleluia, alleluia!

SERMON

1 Corinthians 2:6–16

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not
the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to
nothing. No, we declare God’s wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden
and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers
of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the
Lord of glory. However, as it is written:

“What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived” —
the things God has prepared for those who love him —
these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for,

“Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?”

But we have the mind of Christ.

EXPLANATION OF THE 3RD ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers. On the last day he will raise me and all the dead; And he will give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true.

OFFERING

If you prefer to give online, the code at the right will take you to our Online Giving page. We invite our online givers to join in our offering with an "I Give Online" card in the pew racks.



(You heard our school children sing today. Tuition Grant Fund envelopes are available in the pew rack to support affordable tuition for our school.)

GRADUATION

Teacher – Mr. Justin Wintrone

Natalia Noemi Haakenson
Noelle Marie Larson
Noah Alan John Lofsness
Sihan "Leo" Lu
Jiajia "Vivian" Wang
Zachary Shawn Wietbrock

PRAYER AND LORD'S PRAYER

M: As we come to the close of another school year, let us come before our Father in heaven to ask his blessing and to offer our thanks.

Father, you have brought us through this school year by your grace. Lead us now to acknowledge gratefully the blessings you have given us in body, mind, and spirit. Lord in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

M: We thank you, Father, for Christian teachers, parents, and peers who have served for our good. May their efforts bear fruit in lives that continue to grow in faith, hope, and love for Jesus Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

M: As we part for a time or go on to new stages of life, keep us safe in your protecting care. Refresh us through leisure and rest. Renew in us the desire to grow in all useful knowledge and in the wisdom that comes from you. Lord in your mercy,

C: Hear our prayer.

M: Father, into your hands we commend all that we have and are, asking for your blessing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: **Amen.**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESSING

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace. **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

Hymn 617

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heav’nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Thank you to our school children for beautifying our
Sunday Worship.
Please join us after worship downstairs in the Fellowship Hall
for food and fellowship.*

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THANK YOU!

Dear members and school families of St. John,

What a year full of blessings it has been! I am so grateful to God that He led me here to St. John to meet, teach, and work with such amazing people. Thank you all for welcoming me so warmly into the St. John family; for supporting, encouraging, and praying for me, and showing me so much kindness. I will always look back on this year and remember what a joy it was to be in the classroom and teaching God’s children about His love for them! I will pray that God continues to bless you and the ministry here at St. John! Thank you!

In Christ,
Ali Lindemann

Libertyville Days - June 14-16

What an opportunity to share our school!

What an opportunity to share our church!

What an opportunity to share our Jesus!

We have streams of people passing by our booth!

We have a crowd of people listening to our St. John Family Singers!

Let's make the most of this opportunity!

Let's team up for our booth - an extrovert, an introvert, a church smile, a school smile - together we have a winning team! Recruit your team today!

We want to fill slots for one-hour increments (or more!), beginning at Noon on Friday, 6/14, and continuing through Sunday, 6/16, at 5:00. In person sign-up will take place this Sunday, 5/19, before and after church.

Let's cheer our children singing Jesus! (Friday, June 14 at Noon)

Let's make the most of this opportunity!

Mark your calendars today for June 14-16!

If you have thoughts to share and would like to be personally involved, please contact Outreach Chair Nic Holter (Nic.Holter@StJoh6/16nsLib.com or 619-616-9272).