

"A Man and a People Called to the Liturgy of the Lord"

1 Chronicles 28:20

11 January Anno Domini 1998

The Installation of Pastor Timothy J. Pauls

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Boise, Idaho

Pastor Michael L. McCoy

Dear Redeemed of the LORD God Almighty -- members of Good Shepherd congregation and school, members of neighboring congregations, fellow brothers in the Ministry of the Word, and especially you Pastor Timothy Pauls, let us pray ...

O LORD, our Creator, Redeemer and Comforter, as we come together to worship You in spirit and in truth, we humbly pray that You may open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word, so that we may repent of our sins, believe in Jesus Christ as our only Savior, and grow in grace and holiness. Hear us for His sake. Amen.

What a day! I mean, would you not call it a momentous time with such a gathering assembled? Paint a mental picture of the scene. Just look at those congregating -- the people of the Lord God, the officials of the Church, local members, servants of the king, those entrusted as his stewards, leaders of the people from the immediate area as well as people from the surrounding communities who made the journey to attend. Represented are people from different vocations -- from cattle ranchers to clergy, from liaison to laity -- some seasoned veterans, others rather new warriors -- familiar faces in the great congregation as well as ones not so easily identified.

With such a varied group, was there a consensus of confession? Well, who would not sing the great *Shema* -- *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One (Deuteronomy 6:4)* ? The air would resound with the great confession. For 'twas a tremendous undertaking and the individuals in attendance viewed the entire enterprise from differing points of view, ones probably running the entire broad spectrum -- from "the Lord is with us, we can do it" to "I wonder if we can do it" to "hey, I don't think we can't do this."

One person would be singled out and the responsibility to do this thing that the Lord God would have to be done, was to be placed on his shoulders, much in the way a stole is hung on the shoulders of a pastor. And so it was that one man was called to the difficult, awesome task ... a man named, Solomon, who was given the responsibility of constructing the Temple in Jerusalem.

The event is described in the 28th chapter of 1 Chronicles and the 20th verse serves as the sermon text for this day. They are words spoken by King David to his son, Solomon. Please, dear people of the Lord God and especially you, Pastor Pauls, listen to that verse as we consider it under the theme

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... "A Man and a People Called to the Liturgy of the Lord"

Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, be not dismayed; for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the House of the LORD is finished.

Thus far the inspired and inerrant Word of the LORD our God.

The purpose of the Temple in Old Testament times and what we would call the church meeting place, usually termed a church building in the New Testament times, is the same. Though placed on consecrated ground out of wood, mortar, and stone, both Temple and church buildings were, and are, more than mere man-made structures. The meeting place -- be it the Temple in Solomon's day, a house-church in Asia, a spot beneath a shade tree in the Kenyan countryside, a massive cathedral in Europe, a wood--frame building in a small Australian town, a stone hut on the side of a South American mountain, or this building here at Good Shepherd -- is a place where the Lord God Almighty graciously comes to serve His people and empower them to be in service to Him.

Where two or three are gathered in His Name (Matthew 18:20), there the Lord is in the midst of them. Jesus the Christ, the real Mercy Seat (Romans 3:25), is in the Holy of Holies, on the Ark of the Covenant, and He covers the God-inscribed Law of the Ten Commandments. The Bread of Life, the Manna come down from heaven, is in the midst of His people and He nurtures their bodies and souls as they are drawn to Him while in this land of thorns and thistles. Aaron's Rod is the authority of the Good Shepherd given to His Church to use the staff of His Word, both Law and Gospel, to shepherd His people from here to eternity. Whether it is the Lord of Hosts in the Old Testament Temple or the same Lord God Almighty in His New Testament Church, our God has bound Himself to the Ministry of the Word to serve His people.

A translation of our text from the Greek would give us something like this: *Be strong and be courageous and do it! Fear not, don't be dismayed because the Lord, my God is with you. He will not fail you and not by any means will He forsake you until you have completed all the work for the Liturgy of the House of the Lord.*

As Lutherans, we normally think of pages 5 or 15 when we hear the word, *liturgy*. However, the word *liturgy* simply means *service* and takes on the application of obedience and bondage that begins, not with man, but with the Lord God. It is used when God does the *alien work* (Isaiah 28:20). The *Liturgy* is primarily God's work and so we have, not a man's service here in this building, but the Divine Service in this House of God -- a place where either Aaron of yesteryear, or his official descendants of today announce the absolution of Jehovah over God's people and give them the good Word of the Lord's benediction.

The Liturgy of the Lord is best understood as Incarnational -- as the active and passive obedience of Christ in our place, especially when we behold that, *in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law (Galatians 4:4) and that, being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:7-8)*. In His Resurrection, the Lord broke the bonds of death and devil. In the application of this Good News, God the Holy Spirit works faith in people through Word and Sacrament. Those who are brought to faith and to the faith brings forth fruits of faith. Thus we find, as we do here today, ...

... "A Man and a People Called to the Liturgy of the Lord"

First, consider a man called to the Liturgy of the Lord. In our text, there is a Call extended by God through King David to his son, Solomon -- a Call authorizing and obligating Solomon to build the Lord's Temple. Last month, there was a Call extended by God through Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School to a son of God, Timothy J. Pauls -- a Call authorizing and obligating him to preach the Word in its truth and purity, and to administer the sacraments as instituted by the Lord. On December 7, 1997, you accepted this Call, Pastor Pauls, thereby saying your "amen" to the Call's authorizations and placing yourself under the obligations of the same.

Sometimes that means putting aside personal agendas and letting God's will be done. Such crucifying of the flesh is not an easy thing to do. King David earnestly desired to build the Temple. However, the Lord would not have it be done that way because David was a warrior - a man of blood. The place where God's glory dwelt would not be built by a man of blood, but rather, by the son of David. The Call of the Lord for you to be pastor here includes edifying and building up the Body of Christ. That is not done by being a man of war, a dictator of doctrine, or a legislator of Christian living.

The people assembled here are God's people, each with individual strengths and weaknesses, each with particular sorrows and joys. You are called to preach the Word of God's Law and Gospel that will deliver and protect them from the devil, protect and deliver them from the world, protect them from each other, and sometimes, strange as it may seem, to protect them from you. Take the advice of Paul: *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith (2 Corinthians 13:5)*. Luther writes that a pastor ask himself again and again, "Are you alone wise? Have the others all erred and remained in error for such a long time? What if you are in error and lead so many people into error all to be eternally damned?" (quoted in Sasse's *Union and Confession*, page 23).

To insure that you examine yourself and don't lead yourself and others to such a destruction, you must have a plan in hand -- one that is not of your own making or design. Solomon had such a plan for the building of the Temple and all this David *made clear by the writing from the Hand of the LORD concerning it, all the work to be done according to the plan (v. 19)*. This evening, please take some time to read the entire 28th chapter of 1 Chronicles. Solomon then told the people about God's plan and purpose for the Temple and how it was going to be accomplished among them.

That is exactly what you, Pastor Pauls, are to do here ... tell the people about God's plan and purpose for them and how the accomplished salvation wrought two thousand years ago is theirs today. The Lord's Call to you, extended through this congregation, is your plan in hand ... the plan to go to the Holy Writ and proclaim the Liturgy of the Lord to the people of God.

By the words of your mouth, take them to the edge of Sheol and let them view the flames of Hades (Luke 16:23) burning eternally. Show them the lifeless body of Judas and the futility of dying with only a worldly repentance (Matthew 27:3-5). Let them visit Endor and behold, with shuddering and fear, what happens when one tries to approach God apart from His revealed Word (1 Samuel 28). Take them out to the shepherds who were watching over their flocks by night and let them listen to the angelic choir hymning, *Glory be to God on High! (Luke 2:14)*. Let them hear of God's anger when His Temple is turned into a den of robbers (Mark 21:13) as fund-raisers are forced upon the people, all done in the name of ministry, slowly undermining and supplanting the Word, and keeping the place from being a *House of prayer for all the nations (Mark 11:17)*. Tune the ears of the people so that they may hear Jesus commend the voices of children offering perfect praise in the Temple on

Palm Sunday when they sang their learned liturgical cry, *Hosanna to the Son of David!* (Mark 21:15).

After the Divine Service in the Upper Room and the singing of a hymn, lead them on the dark walk to the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:26). Let these people stand with Mary and the disciple whom Jesus loved, beholding the crucifixion of God (John 19:26) and understanding the height and depth that the Author of Life would ascend and descend to in order to provide an accomplished salvation for the world. Remind them what Jesus meant when He said, *Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up* (John 2:19). In the morning, after the sun has risen, take them to the other garden, the one where the tomb's seal is broken, its contents empty except for burial cloths, and permit them to hear the angelic announcement, *He is not here! He is risen as He said! Come, see the place where He lay* (Matthew 28:6). Reassure these people, and yourself, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that is to be revealed to us* (Romans 8:18) and that this life in which we often struggle, is simply a prelude to eternity with the Lord in Paradise.

Pastor Pauls, *Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, be not dismayed; for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the House of the LORD is finished.*

After having considered the Call of a man to the Service or Liturgy of the Lord, we meditate on the Call of a people to the Liturgy of the Lord. In the 1 Chronicles 28, there was a call also to the Hebrew people ... one that was offered by God through Solomon. Within the congregation assembled there on that day, there were various vocations represented, people occupying different stations in life, and mixed perspectives and points of view. They were all called, however, to work together to accomplish the task at hand, and that is what they did. This evening, please read 1 Chronicles 29 to read how they set about so great a task.

Your Call today, dear people of Good Shepherd, is important too. The Word and the work that you have before you, both in the Church and in the School, is vitally important in Boise. The Lord God has placed this open door for mission work in this area and behold, it is still true today that -- *the fields are already white for harvest* (John 4:35). The signs are true that you have as you leave this parking lot ... "You are now entering the mission field."

The promise is for you and for your children to share with the world. Therefore, come here to this House of God and hear the Word of the Lord and be served by Him that you may, in turn, serve Him. Bring your children to the baptismal font and let them be united with Christ's death, let them behold the empty tomb, and let them gaze upon their reflections in that Old Adam killing water. Have them here in the Divine Service so that they may make the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

The curtain of the Temple, that separated you from the Holy of Holies, was torn from top to bottom at the moment of Christ's death (Mark 15:38). Heaven is open wide. Therefore, draw near to the Lord in the proper and true altar call of the Church as you come to the Lord's Supper and receive Christ. *Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation; for you have tasted the kindness of the Lord. Come to Him, to that Living Stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 2:2-5).

Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the Sanctuary by the Blood of Jesus, by the new and living Way which He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh, and since we have a great Priest over the House of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He Who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Hebrews 10:19-25).

Dear Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and School, the Call that you have extended to and that has been accepted by Pastor Pauls, is still your Call. You are to take it seriously and review it periodically because in it, you have obligated yourselves. You are to receive both your pastors as servants of Jesus Christ, to give them the honor and love and obedience which the Word of God prescribes, to aid both of them by word and deed, and to support them with your diligent, faithful assistance and prayers. You have promised to support them and provide for their living needs. By the Call, each member of this congregation promises to make faithful and regular use of the means of grace. And as you are doing this, please let your pastors drink deeply from God's Word -- enabling them to confess their sins and giving them opportunity to hear the absolution of the Lord from your lips.

Dear brother in Christ and brother in the One Ministry of the Church, the task before you is too great for you to do by yourself. Not only do you need the help of these people, but especially you need the help that only comes from the Lord God. But, as the Bible says, fear not and don't be dismayed. The strength you need to do it, is the strength that the Lord gives you to do it. The courage you need to do it, is the courage God grants you to do it. Therefore, do it!

Therefore, dear pastor and people, *Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Fear not, be not dismayed; for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the House of the LORD is finished.* Amen.

Let us pray a portion of David's prayer that follows our sermon text.

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the Kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as Head above all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou rulest over all. In Thy hand are power and might; and in Thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank Thee, our God, and praise Thy glorious Name (1 Chronicles 29:11-13). Amen.