

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -4th Sunday After Pentecost - June 21, 2026

00:01

It's good to see you. Glad you're here. What a full day when you think about all the things that we'll be paying attention to today.

00:12

To begin with, it is summer solstice. We get more daylight today than any other day. You gotta like that.

00:23

The other is that today is Father's Day, of course,

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so we give thanks for all who are father figures and fathers in our lives. It's

00:43

also today National Indigenous Persons Day, so we give thanks for our siblings

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who settled Turtle Island before many of us and our ancestors came over. And we

00:56

We also pray for continued reconciliation.

01:02

Then we added a little fun sprinkle on top of those things, t-shirt Sunday.

01:08

There's a bit of a method to the madness, perhaps.

01:12

Part of it is, well, it's just fun once in a while to do something different.

01:17

But it occurs to me that sometimes we put out kind of our public face in the form of

01:24

a t-shirt or a sweatshirt or a jacket.

01:27

So I wanted to maybe visit a few minutes

01:31
during the sermon about the different t-shirts

01:34
we have among us and maybe a little bit

01:36
about what the shirt means to you.

01:40
And then somehow we will try to bring that back

01:43
to today's gospel lesson which buckle up.

01:47
It is one that's quite startling in so many ways

01:51
because Jesus warns that following the path that he's on

01:56
is risky, but he also says, "Don't be afraid."

02:02
So, as I said, a very full day today.

02:16
(gentle music)

02:17
[Music]

02:42
The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 10th chapter.

02:49
Jesus said to the 12th,

02:51
"The disciple is not above the teacher,

02:55

nor the servant above the master.

02:57

It is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the servant like the master.

03:04

If they've called the master of the house of Bezalim, how much more will they malign those in his household?

03:12

So, have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing

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in secret that will not become known.

03:23

What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light.

03:26

And what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops, "Do not fear those who kill

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the body, but cannot kill the soul, the self.

03:37

Rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

03:43

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?

03:47

Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your father.

03:52

Even the hairs of your head are all counted.

03:56

So do not be afraid.

03:59

You are of more value than many sparrows.

04:03

went therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my

04:09

Father in heaven. But whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my

04:15

Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.

04:21

I have not come to bring peace but a sword. I have come to set a man against

04:26

his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother

04:31

in law and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father

04:39

or mother more than me is not worthy of me and whoever loves a son or a daughter

04:46

more than me is not worthy of me and whoever does not take up the cross and

04:51

follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it and those

04:59

who lose their life for my sake will find it. The gospel of our Lord.

05:09

Won't you be seated.

05:17

Grace and peace to you from the one whose will it is to restore all things.

05:31

There are some hard sayings of Jesus, and it seems like we got a lot of them in a very undiluted form and directed right at us.

05:49

Wouldn't it be nice if I could somehow just airbrush it all away and tell you that Jesus

05:55

was just having a bad day?

05:58

I'm afraid I can't, but I would like to take a gentler way in if I can.

06:07

Maybe here's where we can talk t-shirts.

06:11

There are theorists who study public communication, and there are exceptions to what I'm about

06:18

to say.

06:19

But most people, if they say something in public, are more apt to internalize it even

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more than they did before.

06:31

In a way, t-shirts are going public.

06:35

They say a little something about us, maybe.

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Some are much more out there, some are a little gentler.

06:44

And as we were gathering today, I asked if it was okay if I bounce around a little bit

06:48

and ask you about your t-shirts just to tell us what's on them.

06:52

And if you have a little story about where the shirt came from, all good too.

06:57

So would you prefer if I start or finish?

07:00

I mean, is it easier if I get the ball rolling?

07:03

I'm not sure.

07:04

Okay, thank you.

07:06

I'll do that.

07:07

So this shirt, visual humor, a pun.

07:11

Some of you know that I kind of appreciate humor.

07:16

I like it.

07:17

But the fun thing about this shirt, every time I put it on, I think about that there

07:21

were two people, Sharon and our dear friend Carla, who saw the shirt when I wasn't in

07:27

the store and they said, "We know who needs this shirt."

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I'm blessed by that, that somebody would think of me and say, "Yeah, that's just, that's

07:39

kind of art."

07:41

So that's my story.

08:07

And I marvel, T-shirts she can wear for a very long time and they don't get ratty and they don't fall apart.

08:19

Marilyn, yours is in two languages, so you may have to translate for those of us who are Anglophone here.

08:26

[Inaudible]

08:42

So this declares to us your commitment to wellness, right?

08:47

Yeah. I love the color too.

08:49

It's -- yes, it does.

08:54

It does compliment you. I'm not a color expert, but it looks like a nice color.

09:01

Now, Bobby, I just have to know.

09:06

This thing is like, "Okay, this needs to be unpacked for us."

09:11

A couple years ago, Don Cherry, while he was broadcasting a game, Caroline Urquay's team

09:24

was just joined.

09:26

And sometimes they made a good chance on the ice at the game, just to show how happy they

09:32

were that they didn't want to.

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And it was a long day.

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And he called a bunch of jerks.

09:55

[Inaudible]

10:01

A story similar where I went to do my undergrad.

10:05

This is back in the late 1800s in the prairies and these Norwegian farm kids would come to town to learn and the townies would

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Say and these are corn farmers. Yeah bunch of coppers

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Same thing that's their mascot. I didn't know that when I actually went to school there's like they're talking about this

10:26

anyway

10:30

There's no story behind Welland Jackfish regalia, so we're swiping left. We're moving on

10:38

No, I'm sure you have a little story a little glimpse

10:41

(laughs)

11:11

I love that it's more than just a baseball team. It's this symbol of a

11:17

world opening backup. Thank you, that's wonderful.

11:28

Not drums, but guitar.

11:32

>> Yes.

11:35

So--

11:35

I feel about this shirt a long time ago.

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And it's because I love to play.

11:43

I've been playing like cars, like therapy, for me.

11:46

And then we bought this exact same shirt from Mike, my friend,

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that I played the car with.

11:52

And so then we wear gray and these shirts and colors,

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those are two amigos.

12:01

And we played for brain injury once in a while.

12:09

[Inaudible]

12:16

I like that it is more than admiring a guitar, but you actually play it.

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And for the good of other people.

12:25

Thank you.

12:27

That was wonderful.

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[Inaudible]

12:54

So it's kind of family too.

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There's a guy back here wearing a jacket so I can't quite make out what your shirt says.

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It's

13:57

to a shirt

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we wear. I don't imagine there's going to be anything more than maybe a little

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friendly pushback when we wear things like this. Like maybe someone would say

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well that's not the team I like. Maybe a little gentle nudging. But then there is

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the stuff that Jesus talks about which I think oftentimes this particular gospel

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passages the one pastor see ahead of time and take their vacation day that

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day. I should check my calendar. But you know it really is a warning that Jesus

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issues his inner circle to say sometimes as people who are prophetic that we

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speak out, the powers that be are not going to applaud. There is going to be

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pushback, there is going to be resistance. I'd like to tell maybe just one story

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about that today, and I want to tell it in the context of Jesus saying in a few

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short sentences, like three, four times, "Don't be afraid, have no fear." Which for

15:48

those of us who kind of operate as risk-averse people, it's like, "Really?

15:52

don't be afraid that's asking me not to breathe, but yet don't be afraid. The

16:00

story is from one of the commentators who reflected on this passage for us

16:05

this week, Danny Zacharias. I've mentioned him in another sermon just because I'm

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so taken by the fact that he is an indigenous Christian walking two roads,

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as my Lakota friends would say, he talks about that struggle and says that the

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European-born church looks at him a little side-eyed because he still

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celebrates his traditions and his celebrations and ceremonies. They don't

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quite know what to do with that. His indigenous friends, because he is

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Christian say, "Well you're kind of an apple and that's not a compliment." What it

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means is that your skin is red but your inside is white. So he's being accused of

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siding with the colonists against his own people. I think that might be an

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actual lived life example of what happens when someone chooses a path that

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someone doesn't accept or doesn't understand. I'm sure there are days it

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would be a lot easier to not be public in the commitments that he is. And yet

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there's this don't be afraid. And I would like to pick apart a word because it

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comes up a couple of times. The word soul. Don't fear those who can only kill your

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body but be afraid of the death of your soul. The soul is understood, I think, in

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biblical imagination as to be the totality of yourself. Sometimes even the

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word life is used that way to talk about all of who you are. So when Jesus says

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don't be afraid, he's saying maybe pick your fears that there's maybe even a

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bigger peril at having somebody extinguish your soul and yourself. As I

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say those words out loud, another story comes to mind that I'm going to tell

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a bit more extemporaneously perhaps. Are you familiar with a psychiatrist Victor

18:31

Frankel who survived concentration camps? He wrote a delightful book titled
Man's

18:37

Search for Meaning. In the book he talks often about how it is that the Nazis who

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have incarcerated his whole people and who have a systematic murder pogrom at

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work, a holocaust. He vowed that no matter what happened, he would always have a

19:01

choice to be himself. That maybe he would be punished, but he was determined not to

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let people take away who he was. And when people said, "Well, why are you being so

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kind in such a brutal milieu as this he would say because that is myself.

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Maybe those two stories are helpful for us as we think about how difficult it

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might be sometimes to be a prophetic voice. We may not experience it as much

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in Canada, but certainly my Palestinian colleagues who are Christian do. For example, there was

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a pastor recently elected bishop who was actually barred, his mother was barred from getting

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to the church where the consecration ceremony was to happen. Not far from us. In fact, I

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I think it was a group calling themselves Christian this week said that this whole empathy

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is just too woke and the beatitudes are too woke.

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That we need a robust Christianity that is aggressive, that pushes for conversion and

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that pushes one political viewpoint over all others.

20:38

Oh, by the way, they don't ordain women as pastors.

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That's difficult.

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Difficult to digest.

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But I think it further illustrates the divide that happens even within one particular religion.

21:07

But we need to come back to what it means to not be afraid.

21:16

Nelson Mandela, many of you are familiar with his life story, 27 years imprisoned for fighting

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for the liberation of a people and equality for all peoples in a multi-ethnic country,

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South Africa.

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She famously says, "Courage is not the absence of fear, it's the overcoming."

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And I would add to that, that he may have been one of the very few who could cultivate

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courage in solitary confinement.

21:58

Most of the rest of us, though, we have the reality, and I think the good news, that courage

22:05

is courageous, even if it's among just a few.

22:11

Courage to hang on to who we really are, to remember whose we are, to hang on to that,

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to remember that and to remember that the one who we follow has an end game that is

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about saving the very self and soul of every person and all creation, the restoration of

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all things.

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May spirit breathe courage into each of us and among us all as we follow that path.

22:53

Amen.