

Proper 20/18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost (Series C)

“Seek Where You May to Find a Way” (*Lutheran Service Book*, #557; *Christian Worship*, #395)

In our diverse and pluralistic culture, the exclusive claims of Christianity can sometimes make us squirm just a bit. Secular society regularly claims that really all religions lead to the same God; there are just different paths. Or we are told to forget religion altogether—God and ultimate truth are not found externally but rather within ourselves. “Just look inside yourself and you’ll discover the divine and who you are and who you are meant to be.”

Of course Scripture says differently. “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) And Jesus says differently, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except by me.” (John 14:6)

In this hymn, written for his own ordination, Pastor Weissel affirms this essential Christian teaching. In the first three stanzas, he says to others, “Go ahead; look for meaning in life wherever you want—wealth, fame, talent, power, other gods, even within yourself. As for me, my heart is at peace; my soul is at rest. I have the cross and empty tomb of Jesus and that is all I need. That same promise is there for you too.”

In his final stanza, he directs his attention to Christ himself, confesses his faith and give thanks to God for his great gift.

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

ALLELUIA!



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Seek where you may to find a way that leads to your salvation.  
My heart is stilled, on Christ I build, he is the one foundation.  
His Word is sure, his works endure; he overthrows all evil foes;  
through him I more than conquer.

Seek whom you may to be your stay, none can redeem his brother.  
All helpers failed; this man prevailed, the God-man and none other,  
our Servant-King of whom we sing.

We're justified because he died, the guilty being guiltless.

Seek him alone who did atone, who did your souls deliver.

O seek him first, all you who thirst for grace that fails you never.

In ev'ry need seek him indeed; to ev'ry heart he will impart

his blessings without measure.

My heart's delight, my crown most bright, O Christ, my joy forever.

Not wealth nor pride nor fortune's tide our bonds of love shall sever.

You are my Lord; your precious Word shall guide my way

and help me stay forever in your presence.

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Text: German hymn by Rev. Georg Weissel, 1590-1635. The English translation was prepared in 1938 by Arthur P. Voss for *The Lutheran Hymnal*. It has been slightly altered and remains copyright © 1941 Concordia Publishing House.

Tune: SUCH WER DA WILL was composed by Weissel's close friend, Johann Stobäus (1580-1646), for a different text but soon became associated with this hymn.

The tune is in the public domain.

[This devotion was prepared for the website of the Center for Church Music. It may be downloaded and duplicated for local use.]

#### Other notes—

Weissel also wrote "Lift Up, Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" (a paraphrase of Psalm 24) which is still included today in most Protestant and Roman Catholic hymnals in Catherine Winkworth's translation.

J. S. Bach used another of Weissel's hymn—"Nun liebe Seel, nun ist es Zeit" in Part V of his *Christmas Oratorio*.

Twenty-three of Weissel's hymns are extant.