

Proper 7/Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Series C)

“Rise, Shine, You People” (*Lutheran Service Book* #825)

“Rise and shine!” The cheerful voice of my mother greeted me and my siblings in the mornings when we were growing up. Apparently one of the duties of mothers back in the day was to serve as the household alarm clock, rousing children for school, or play, or whatever was planned for that day. So “Rise and shine!” it was in our house.

There are two parts to that command. The easier one to obey was the command to rise, to get up. The command to shine was more difficult, because it said that not just any old rising will do. No—we were expected to get out of bed in a certain way. No grumbling, no complaining about lack of sleep, no bleary eyes, no down cast faces were allowed. We needed to be ready to shine!

“Rise and shine!” is frequently used in the military as well. There soldiers are to get out of bed, and then make sure their shoes are shined and ready to go. More than just getting up is expected. Soldiers are to look their best, literally to shine their shoes.

To shine is to look one’s best. We say a musician shines when she give a really fine performance. To shine also implies something about the performer’s personality—sunny, upbeat, pleasant.

How does a Christian rise and shine? Our Gospel reading from Luke 8:26-39 makes that clear. The man beset by a legion of demons is unable to raise himself. He is unable to shine on his own. For him, rising and shining are gifts—gifts given by a word spoken from outside the man, spoken by Jesus. Here’s the key to our rising and shining.

In baptism, we rise with Christ—or better, we are raised with Christ. We do not, under our own power, rise. God, in Christ, raises us. And then, washed clean by the waters of baptism, our faces, our bodies, our whole selves shine.

The story goes on. Every one of the townspeople is afraid, and they ask Jesus to leave the area. And the man who can now rise and shine? He asks to go with Jesus, but Jesus tells him to return to the city, saying “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” (NRSV)

So rise! shine! see! and “to all the world go out and tell the story of Jesus’ glory.”

Gracious and loving God, you raised Jesus from death and give life to your church through the Holy Spirit. We cannot rise unless you lift us up; we cannot shine without the cleansing waters of baptism. Raise us, we pray, and fill us with your Spirit so we are able to say and sing all that you have done for us, to all the world. We pray in the name of Jesus, our healer and Lord. Amen

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<photo of Michael>

Rise, shine, you people! Christ the Lord has entered
our human story; God in him is centered.
He comes to us, by death and sin surrounded,
with grace unbounded.

See how he sends the pow'rs of evil reeling;
he brings us freedom, light and life and healing.
All men and women, who by guilt are driven,
now are forgiven.

Come, celebrate, your banners high unfurling,
your songs and prayers against the darkness hurling.
To all the world go out and tell the story
of Jesus' glory.

Tell how the Father sent the Son to save us.
Tell of the Son, who life and freedom gave us.
Tell how the Spirit calls from ev'ry nation
his new creation.

Text: Ronald A. Klug, b. 1939, alt.

Tune: WOJTKIEWIECZ. Dale Wood, 1934-2003

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