

St. John's Lutheran Church — Walhalla, SC
17th Sunday after Pentecost — September 27, 2020
Worship at Biggerstaff Retreat (also on Facebook) — 9:30 AM

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONGS - "Jesus Name Above All Names"

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Brief Silence is kept for reflection.

Faithful God, **have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN — "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

see next page

THE APOSTOLIC GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Leader: Let us pray . . . God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

People: Amen.

THE SCRIPTURE READINGS

see next page

THE MESSAGE

Pastor Rachel L. Connelly

HYMN OF RESPONSE — "O Master, Let Me Walk With You"

see next page

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

SONG OF PRAYER— “Glorify Thy Name”

see next page

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community; make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION / WORDS OF DISTRIBUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE BLESSING

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG — “Praise to You O God of Mercy”

see next page

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Remember the poor. **C** Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?” ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? ²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

PSALM 25: 1-9

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

²**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

³Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

⁴**Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.**

⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me, or you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

⁶**Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

⁸**You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

⁹You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

NEW TESTAMENT READING: Philippians 2: 1-13 ²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God’s doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

GOSPEL READING: Matthew 21: 23-32

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

SONGS FOR WORSHIP

Jesus Name Above All Names

Jesus name above all names
Beautiful Saviour glorious Lord
Emmanuel God is with us
Blessed Redeemer living Word

Repeat

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

- 1 Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing thy grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of thy redeeming love.
- 2 Here I raise my Ebenezer:
Higher by thy help I've come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wand'ring from the fold of God;
He, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.
- 3 Oh, to grace how great a debtor
daily I'm constrained to be;
let that goodness, like a fetter
bind my wand'ring heart to thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it;
prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it;
seal it for thy courts above.

Text: Robert Robinson, 1735-1790, alt.

O Master, Let Me Walk with You

- 1 O Master, let me walk with you
in lowly paths of service true;
tell me your secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.
- 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.
- 3 Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
in closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836-1918, alt.

Glorify Thy Name

Verse 1

Father we love You
We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy name in all the earth
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy Name in All the Earth

Verse 2

Jesus we love You
We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy name in all the earth
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name in all the earth

Verse 3

Spirit we love You
We worship and adore You
Glorify Thy name in all the earth
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name
Glorify Thy name in all the earth

CCLI Song No. 1383

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Praise to You, O God of Mercy

- 1 Praise to you, O God of mercy:
thanks be to you forever!
Raising high the weak and lowly:
thanks be to you forever!

Refrain

Strong is your faithfulness,
strong is your love,
rememb'ring your covenant of life with us.

- 2 From of old you loved and sought us:
thanks be to you forever!
Truth and justice you have taught us:
thanks be to you forever! *Refrain*

- 3 Praise to you, O God of mercy:
thanks be to you forever!
Raising high the weak and lowly:
thanks be to you forever!
Thanks be to you forever!

Text: Now the Feast and Celebration, Marty Haugen, b. 1950
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