

September 27th Worship
17th Sunday After Pentecost

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.

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.

Prayer of the Day

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.

Amen.

Lesson – Psalm 25:1-9

¹To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

²My 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.

⁴Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

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

⁶Remember, 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.

⁸You 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.

Gospel – 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."

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Between last week's gospel text from Matthew chapter 20 and this week's Gospel text from later on in Matthew chapter 21, we get my absolute favorite Jesus story. And it may surprise you a bit that this is your pastor's favorite Jesus moment, but I believe it's when we truly see the human side of Jesus. It is the moment when he enters the temple just after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and he sees the money changers and all the things that anger him that are taking place in the temple. And he sends those tables flying. He throws the tables of the money changers. He drives them out with whips and he's angry.

And that brings us to this Gospel text, and the Pharisees, the chief priests, and the elders of the people are angry about his anger. They're angry that in his anger, he came into the temple and threw tables. And they question his authority because they perceive that space to be theirs. They perceive that structure and all that is within it, to be theirs. And they believe that all that goes on within those walls is up to them because they are the chief priests. They are the elders. They have put in their time. They have put in their money. Which brings us back to last week's Gospel text and the laborers in the vineyard.

We are continually confronted with the challenge of the good news. We are continually confronted with the things that make us feel a little bit unsettled about this good word that Jesus brings into the world. They ask him, "by whose authority do you do these things? What makes you think you can come into our temple and say that the things that we deem to be okay are not? Who has given you the authority to say that your father's house should be a house of prayer and that we have turned it into a den of thieves.? Who's given you that authority?

And they are angry because it is theirs and they are continually challenged and confronted with the unsettling nature of the good news.

Jesus responds to their question with the question of his own. "If you can tell me this, I will tell you the answer to your question." And they are stuck. So he says, "neither will I tell you. If you can't answer my question, I won't answer yours."

So he tells them a story, The Parable of the Two Sons. One son says, "yep. I'll go and do what you've asked me to do father," and then doesn't. And the one who says, "yeah, I'm not going to do that," and quickly realizes he probably should. "Which one of the two did the will of the father?" Of course the one that said they won't, but did.

"Truly I tell you the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you."

The good news of this Gospel text is not for the religious elite in this story. The good news of this situation is not for the ones who know it so well, it's not for the chief priests. It's not for the elders.

Rather it is for the masses. It is for the others. It is for their neighbors. It is for the ones that they have deemed unfit for the kingdom of heaven.

“Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you because you see John came and preached and pointed to the goodness that was to come, and you didn't believe him. But, those that you have deemed unfit and disqualified from this good news of Jesus Christ, are the ones that got it. They are the ones, who knew they needed God's grace, who got it. They are the ones who understood it what this meant for them.

We all get it. But, the ones who didn't think they needed it, the ones who thought they had done everything right and checked every box are the ones who didn't think they needed it, and therefore didn't grasp it, are the ones for whom this is the greatest challenge.

Jesus confronts them by saying the people that you see as least deserving are the ones who get it.

He challenges us, too. (You knew this was coming.)

You see, in this story, in this parable, I would bet most of us, you and I included, first think of the ones that we considered to be the tax collectors and the prostitutes, right. I'd bet that our minds first go to the ones that we consider to be unfit. And maybe this is easier to do in this, the height of election season. Especially if you are on social media. I could rattle off 10 people who fall into that category that I initially think are less worthy. I'm undoubtedly wrong in that. Absolutely wrong. At the same time, I would be willing to bet that I fall into that category of most of those same 10 people.

You may very well be able to relate. You could probably easily and readily come up with a list of those that you deemed to be unfit for the kingdom of heaven. And with a little more thought you can most likely come up with the list of folks who have you on their list.

The good news of Jesus Christ unsettles our understanding of the way we think it ought to be.

The good news of Jesus Christ challenges the understanding that we have of the world we live in.

Because again, going back to last week, we are a merit based society. We are a, “what have you done for me lately” society. That's what makes us tick.

Jesus sets that table neatly on a table and flips it over as he did in the temple.

I almost think Jesus wanted to march into that temple and say “you fools! It's for everybody!”

And in a way he did. In a way he did say, “this is what John was preaching. John called you to repentance. The tax collector and the prostitute have. Because they knew they needed to. But you, chief priests and elders, who are so busy thinking of what others need to do to deserve it forgot that you needed to do it, too.”

John does not call a select few into repentance. John calls everybody into repentance. Each and every one of us. We are all sinners and fall short of the glory of God, every one of us. And that's the good news because that puts every one of us into that category of tax collectors and prostitutes.

Because we are all on somebody's list like that. We are all guilty of thinking others don't deserve it. We are all some on someone's list of those that don't deserve it. And the good news of this gospel text, the good news we hear today is that Jesus tells us it is for us, that each and every one of us has been called to this place in this purpose. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

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.

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit whom we name now both silently and aloud. 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.

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.

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.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

Mothering God,

Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

Thanks be to God

At Home Communion Liturgy

+WORDS OF INSTITUTION+

(Holding the bread) In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me." When we eat this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

(Tear the bread, share with each person – invite them to dip into the cup of wine/grace juice) +

LORD'S PRAYER +

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION +

In the mystery of Christ's resurrection, you shine light into darkness, provide water that brings new life, and give bread that nourishes your people and frees from our fear. Help us be witnesses of the resurrection and empower us to show your glory to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. AMEN +

BLESSING EACH OTHER +

(Using your pointer finger, dip it in the bowl of water, and make the sign of the cross on another's forehead or the back of their hand)

"Child of God, marked as God's own, Jesus loves you, and will love you forever. AMEN"

Take turns until each person has been blessed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Opportunities to Connect!

It has been six months since we were last physically in worship together. The first time we voice that this past week in the office, it hit us like a ton of bricks. Now that we are into the “program year” of the church season, we are going to be offering YOU opportunities to RE-connect with your church family. Each day throughout the week there will be an opportunity for you to enjoy fellowship and/or prayer here at church.

Mondays: Coffee and Conversation in the Upper Fellowship Hall at 9 am

Tuesdays: Lunch and Laughter

Wednesdays: Youth and Family Ministries throughout the Day

Thursdays: Sanctuary open for “Prayer Around the Cross

*Communion is available each day by appointment

*All opportunities require a mask and spacing precautions will be in place

MASKS! MASKS! MASKS!

Stop into the church office TODAY to get your very own Good Shepherd Face Mask. These masks are FOR YOU! If you would like to make a free-will donation for your mask we will graciously accept.

Church Pews available for purchase

We have officially surpassed the 65 donor goal for our “65 for 65 Anniversary Appeal” and have now shifted our focus to a targeted ask for the purchase of chairs and disposition of the pews.

If you would like your very own piece of Good Shepherd history in the form of a pew please contact the church office.

The month of October is your opportunity to claim a pew. If you’d like to claim it with your dollars you can do that. If you want to claim it because you put money towards them 57 years ago you can do that. We have a November 1st target date of having the pews out of the building.

If you’d like to purchase a chair, chairs for your family, a row of chairs, or a section of chairs we will be happy to have those conversations as well. Each chair costs \$70. We’ve already had 30 chairs purchased.

Any funds raised over the cost of the chairs will be put towards the remaining balance on the Boiler Loan from the Good Shepherd Endowment Fund.