

October 11th Worship
19th 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

Lord of the feast, you have prepared a table before all peoples and poured out your life with abundance. Call us again to your banquet. Strengthen us by what is honorable, just, and pure, and transform us into a people of righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Lesson – Philippians 4:1-9

¹My brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

²I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Gospel – Matthew 22:1-14

¹Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Message

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

We're given another parable. We'll probably have one next week as well. So, we remember our questions: who is what, and what is why? Who are the characters at play and how do we relate to them?

Parables are often dealing with the kingdom of heaven in some way. What things that we hear are relating to what things we experienced in real life? Where do we place ourselves? Who is God in these stories? Who is Jesus? Why are certain characters talked about the way they are talked about?

So we're given another parable and this parable is difficult to hear. It's difficult to hear because we hear it and our minds immediately, perhaps, go to the violence and anger that we hear. We immediately go to first, how the wedding guests who didn't come - how they treat the slaves that were sent out. They seize them, mistreat them, and kill them. The King is enraged because of it.

And, hearing this, it may be difficult - and understandably so - to separate ourselves from this anger and rage that we get early on in this gospel texts from the rest of the story we hear because we get latched onto this anger and this rage. And we hear in the end, when the King has sent the slaves out to get anybody who will come, anybody who wants to come, and there's the one who isn't closed properly, and we're still attached to that anger and violence, and when he sees the man who wasn't wearing his wedding robe, he has him bound hand and foot and thrown and the outer darkness. Our early hearing of that rage and violence shapes how we hear the rest of the story.

Now, I want you to hear the rest of the story because, believe it or not, there's other ways to hear this Gospel text. We've come to understand parables when we hear the kingdom of heaven and we hear of a King who does something in a parable we frequently we relate and equate that to God in Jesus Christ. So that's part of the difficulty of hearing this because we don't think of God as that angry, vengeful, full of rage God.

I was reading a commentary this week by pastor Eric Thompson, who serves a church in Fargo and he talked about there almost being two parables at play here.

The first parable ends with verse 10, “where those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad, so the wedding hall was filled with guests.” The first parable really kind of ends there if you will. We have this strong theme of the generosity of the king – God’s generosity – because he goes out and seeks those who weren’t originally invited. God seeks out those who didn’t originally have a spot.

And then there's a second one, starting with verse 11. The focus of this second parable is that guest who didn't have the wedding robe on. What does that even mean? What is that about? It causes some struggle for us, I imagine.

But, if we allow ourselves to look beyond the anger and violence that we can so easily use this gospel text to justify. If we get ourselves beyond that and look at other ways that we might interpret this, other lenses through which we might see this gospel text, we realize this is almost an indictment upon ourselves, especially if we look at it in the context of the other gospel texts we've heard recently where we've had that theme, and I think it a few weeks ago, where we were confronted with the “what have you done for me lately” culture that we live in.

If we look at these characters, the ones who were supposed to be at that wedding feast. If a King throws a wedding banquet for his son, those who have earned their spot at the table should be there. Those who are higher up in the hierarchy of society that they knew, they were the ones that would be there. It shouldn't have been a question of whether or not they would accept the invitation.

But, when the slaves go out to bring the guests, curious why they haven't already come, they make light of it and go away – one to his farm, another to his business, and the rest seize the slaves, mistreat them and kill them.

The things that they needed to do, their work, the stuff that they needed to do to justify their presence, their status in society gets in the way of them receiving this great banquet feast. This idea that they are judged, their worth is based upon what they've done for society lately, gets in the way of them receiving this great banquet feast.

Now, God in Jesus could be satisfied with that.

If God in Jesus Christ wanted to be satisfied with the people that had to work and work and work and work in order to gain grace, they could. We could very well go with an understanding of God and Jesus Christ, who says you need to do all these things to receive the grace...which I give to you.

But you don't.

You don't need to do.

This isn't something we have to earn.

God's grace is something that is freely given.

Now we come to that guest. The one who is among those who were brought in from the streets, both good and bad. Coming into the wedding banquet they would have been given the wedding robe. They would all look ready for a party - Think of a black tie affair – and the King sees the one who was not adorned the wedding robe.

In this parable, and this is what parables are, they are a picture of what God is about. They are a picture painted to help us understand what God is up to. In this painting of God's grace, the robe isn't a garment, but rather it's those things that we clothe ourselves in.

It is God's grace.

It's a gift we receive - freely given to us in our Baptism.

It's a gift that we wear each and every day, everywhere we go in that cross that we see on our foreheads.

And one of those that has been gathered to come to the table is not clothed in God's grace. They've not closed themselves in God's grace. They think that what they have done has earned them their spot at this table. And the King, seeing this he calls them on it. He tells them this isn't something you have earned, but it's something that's freely given to you. Clothe yourselves in God's grace and mercy.

We tie our worth to the things that we do do. Jesus would rather we simply clothe ourselves with God's grace and God's mercy.

Pastor Erick Thompson writes,

“If we want to prove ourselves worthy, we will indeed feel the sting of “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Yet, if we remember that God's grace is what saves us, we won't worry how we are clothed, or who else God has decided to include in the Wedding Banquet. There is no room for piety or first rate Christians in the kingdom of heaven. There is only room for those whom God has chosen. The trick is, can we live with a God who doesn't care how great we are at our jobs, and who has chosen everyone?”

This parable challenges us to accept that God would accept us for who God made us to be.

People of God. Can we do that?

And, can we do it for our neighbor?

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

With confidence in God's grace and mercy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Gracious host, fill your church with a spirit of joyous hospitality. We pray for bishops, teachers, church leaders, and all children of God as they invite others to your table of boundless grace. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious host, as creation waits with eager longing for redemption, protect your creatures that are mistreated. Restore valleys, mountains and pastures, and still and running waters. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious host, as you set a table in the presence of enemies, so bless the efforts of diplomats, international peace workers, and world leaders who navigate conflict. May they proceed with dialogue and understanding, so that justice and peace prevails. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious host, let your gentleness be known among those who are weary or ill whom we name now silently and aloud. Strengthen doctors, medical care workers, and caretakers who see to their needs. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious host, when we are quick to judge outward appearance, remind us how you clothe all in your mercy. We pray for ministries that provide needed clothing and other personal care assistance in this community. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Gracious host, as we remember those who have died and are gathered at the heavenly banquet, comfort us with your presence. Assure us of your peace at all times. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Listen as we call on you, O God, and enfold in your loving arms all for whom we pray, in the name of Jesus 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!

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.