

November 8th Worship
23rd Sunday After Pentecost

Introduction to the Day

Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.

Prayer of the Day

O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Lesson – Amos 5:18-24

¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD!
Why do you want the day of the LORD?
It is darkness, not light;
¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by
a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand
against the wall,
and was bitten by a snake.
²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings
and grain offerings, I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted
animals I will not look upon.
²³Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
²⁴But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream

Gospel – Matthew 25:1-13

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God and from our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. AMEN

This first part in our, “Out of the Ordinary” sermon series has us hearing the words of the prophet Amos. And these words come to us as a bit of a challenge. Amos was speaking to a crowd longing for hre Day of the Lord to come. He questions them. Why is that something you are longing for? Why is this something you strive for?

After a bit of metaphor to illustrate for them the silliness of their actions, he goes in pretty hard starting at verse 21.

“I hate, I despise your festivals and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. And the offerings of well-being of your fed animals, I will not look upon it. Take away from me the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the melody of your heart. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness, like an ever-flowing stream.

You almost get a sense that Amos saw through the things that people were doing. He saw through them to the point that he had the sense that they're only doing them because they thought that is what they're *supposed* to do. These things became their normal and they did them because they always did them. But, they were being done NOT in a way of worship or praise necessarily, but in a way of “we have to do this.”

“I hate. I despise your festivals. I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Your normal. Your ordinary. Get rid of it.”

We worry, we so often wonder, if we're doing *it* right. If something in the way of how we do something is changed it is like our world is tipped upside down. When our normal, when our ordinary gets disrupted. We have this period of floundering. We have this period of adjusting.

I think often of that day when we are able to worship in person again, and what it will be like. I think of our, our people who are so used to greeting with a large embrace which will most likely now be discouraged. I think of our fellowship time when we have folks elbow to elbow at tables enjoying snacks, coffee, and company...and I wonder if that will continue. I think of our children who becomes so comfortable and welcomed in this place that they enter and they run to the first person they see to give a big hug, and wondering if that will be our normal again.

And I wonder what this is doing to our ordinary?

What is this doing to our normal?

What is this doing to challenge the norms that we have come to be so comfortable with?

Amos tells us, “I don't care about those things. I don't care about your normal. Take away from me the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the melody of your harps,” but he doesn't stop there. He doesn't just say, “get out of your normal.” He doesn't just say “step out of your ordinary.”

He gives marching orders.

This Sunday we find ourselves sandwiched between an election, and a day on our calendar where we will remember veterans of our military. And in the middle of these two American traditions, we hear the prophetic voice of Amos saying, “let justice roll down like waters. And righteousness flow like a stream.”

What does it mean for us that we find ourselves sandwiched between an election - where half of our country didn't get the person they wanted and half did - and the holiday that we have on our calendars that will flood our social media with graphics and memes and inspirational sayings. In the midst of that sandwich, we are challenged to “let justice roll down like a mighty water.” Amos is telling us that if all we do is rally around ideas once every four years and once a year set aside a day to give thanks to our veterans who served in our militaries, if that's all it is, it is nothing.

That is our noisy song.

That is the melody of our harps.

Those are the festivals.

Those are the solemn assemblies.

So, what does it mean? What does it mean that Amos calls us to let justice roll down in the midst of our comfort?

We get comfortable. We get used to our normal. And, we think that comfort equals right. We think that if we're doing something and it feels good and we're comfortable doing it is the right thing.

So often it's the exact opposite

Our Gospel text – a confusing parable involving bridesmaids, bridesgrooms, lamps, and oil – though confusing tells us the importance of that preparation. It shows us the importance of thinking that what we have, could be more. “Truly I tell you, keep awake, be prepared. For you know neither the day nor the hour when Christ will come.” Don't simply rest on doing what you do because you're a person of faith. Don't just sit in your comfort. Don't just find yourself in your normal and your ordinary expecting it to happen. Don't just say I do what I'm supposed to do as a person of faith.

If we find our solace in “I go to church even when it is online, even when I can't be in the church, and continue in the comfort of what I've always done, all will be well.” If that's it, we're doing it wrong.

But Amos challenges us. Amos pushes us out of our ordinary. Amos nudges us out of our normal, pushing us into a bit of discomfort and challenges us.

“You want to really live it? Let justice roll down like waters and let righteousness flow like a stream.”

People of God. Join me in this discomfort as we step out of our ordinary into the life that God intends for God's church. It will be difficult. It will be uncomfortable. It will be worth it. Because? We are a difficult people, and we are worth it.

Thanks. Be to God. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

Offering and Offertory Prayer

Our 4th Quarter Well Offering / Mission Offering:

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and Lutheran Disaster Response.

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. **Amen.**

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 +

Lord Jesus, in this simple meal you have set a banquet. Sustain us on the journey, strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children, and give us glad and generous hearts as we meet you on the way.

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.

Blessing

May the God of all creation,
in whose image we are made,
who claims us and calls us beloved,
who strengthens us for service,
give you reason to rejoice and be glad!

The blessing of God,

Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit,
be with you today and always.

Amen.

Dismissal

Beloved of God,
go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS! ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Opportunities to Connect!

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

Last call for the purchase/claiming of Church Pews

Please contact DeAnne in the church office if you would like to claim or purchase a church pew.

Funds received over the cost of new chairs will be used towards eliminating the debt from the purchase of the new boilers.