

October 17th, 2021 – Twenty First Sunday After Pentecost
Introduction to the Day

Today's gospel starts with disciples obsessing over who will be closest to Jesus, leading to Jesus teaching his followers about God's take on importance and power. Here Jesus makes it explicit that the reversal of values in God's community is a direct challenge to the values of the dominant culture, where wielding power over others is what makes you great. When we pray "your kingdom come" we are praying for an end to tyranny and oppression. We pray this gathered around the cross, a sign of great shame transformed to be the sign of great honor and service.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
whose teaching is life,
whose presence is sure,
and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:
like lost sheep, we have gone astray.
We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity.
We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression.

**We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.
Free us from our sin, gracious God.
Listen when we call out to you for help.
Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves.**

Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
By the gift of grace in ☩ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous.

Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

Gathering Song "Rise, Shine, you People!"

#665 vs. 1,3,4

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Lesson – Hebrews 5:1-10

¹Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; ³and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you";
⁶as he says also in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek."

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Children's Message

Gospel – Mark 10:35-45

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” ³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” ³⁹They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Message

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

Our Gospel text for today wraps up for us a bit of a journey that we have been on.

Throughout this journey we have heard Jesus, three times, talk about the suffering and death that he is to endure as the Son of Man.

Throughout this journey we have heard Jesus, three times, talk about who the Kingdom of God is for, in context of who dominant culture determines is unqualified.

Throughout this journey Jesus has challenged his listeners, and us, regarding from where it is that we gleam our identity.

He has taken children, culturally insignificant ones, in his lap telling his followers that to welcome them is to welcome God.

The journey has brought them from Galilee, down the coast to Judea and beyond the Jordan and up to Jerusalem. It has been a journey in every sense of the word.

And in all of it, we have heard, three times, Jesus reference being first.

It may not seem like much, but this is a prime example of how the words that we use, that Jesus uses, really matter. Because, there is a definite difference in the proclamations that Jesus makes with these statements on being first.

Two of the times that Jesus references being first, or being great, are in the context of the disciples having an argument. First it was about who among them was the greatest, and then over who would sit at his right and his left.

In that first exchange, fighting over who is greatest among them, Jesus says, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all AND servant of all.” The next time the disciples are having an argument, our Gospel text for today, Jesus says, “but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all.”

While those warnings, if you will, seem difficult to grasp, the language he uses is hopeful. It is not final. If you want to achieve these things, then you must do these things. It can be done.

The other time where being first is mentioned, Jesus speaks directly to the identity of the rich man, and from where he draws his worth. The rich man believes that he has done all that is to be done to get that which he hopes to receive. Upon hearing what Jesus had to say, though it was hopeful, the rich man grieved. He was told

what he needed to hear, but not what he wanted to hear. His riches were his identity. To which Jesus responds, “Many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

If your identity is tied to your having the most and being first, you will be last. The rich man couldn’t grasp it. He grieved. The repentance ship had sailed. He was done.

Back to Jesus not being in the business of finality. Where there is hope, and a desire, there is no finality.

Those who WANT to be first. Those who WISH to become great. There is hope for them. Those who have a desire to do what it is that God in Jesus Christ calls them to do, have hope.

In teaching his disciples this lesson, Jesus uses examples that they would be able to relate to. “You know the gentiles. Those who have the power among them lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants. - That is not how it is in the Kingdom of God. That is not how it is as Jesus followers.”

Jesus tells them, plain as day, that if being the one on the right and the one on the left is something they are concerning themselves with, they are doing it wrong. And, newsflash, we’ll learn at his crucifixion that the ones on his right and left are criminals.

If the disciples are truly to sign on to a life of being followers of Jesus they are singing on to a life that could, and most likely will, lead to a death much like his. Is that something they are willing to do. Is that a cup that they will be able to drink from? They say they are able.

For Jesus, the Kingdom of Heaven is not a brag board where we sit around and talk about how great we are and all of the wonderful things we have done. The Kingdom of God is a kingdom of doing for others...because that is what we are supposed to do.

Our identity in the Kingdom of God is not tied to being first or having the most. It is tied to who we serve. Who we care for. What we do for others without worrying about what has been done for us, while doing it because we know what has been done for us.

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many.”

The many are you and me. The many are the ones we least wish it would be. The many are the ones we have been told are insignificant and without worth. That is who God in Jesus Chirst is for.

So, why wouldn’t we be for them, too?

Thanks be to God. Amen

Song of the Day

“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service”

#712 vs. 1,3,4

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God’s creation.

A brief silence.

Holy One, for the gift of the church handed down through the ages and for all who carry on the servant ministry of Jesus, we praise you. Send your Holy Spirit upon all who are discerning calls to ministry in its many forms and equip them with your gifts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creating One, for the lush and abundant habitat you provide for all your creatures, we praise you. Provide healing for the earth so that waterfowl, reptiles, wild horses, dolphins, and all living things flourish as you intend. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Suffering One, for all who work toward peace and who lead nations with a servant's heart, we praise you. Bring justice for all who suffer violence, persecution, discrimination, hunger, poverty, and homelessness, and create places of refuge for all people. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Merciful One, for all who do the work of healing in mind, body, and spirit, we praise you. Surround and comfort all who struggle with depression, anxiety, cancer, diabetes, dementia, or any illness (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, and the family of Tom Homes*), that all may be healed. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Sustaining One, for all who volunteer for the vitality of this congregation, we praise you. Strengthen and encourage greeters, ushers, office volunteers, bakers, counters, committee and group leaders, teachers, students, evangelists, singers, builders, nurturers, and all who serve with generous hearts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Risen One, we thank you for those who have shaped your church and shared your gospel. Through the witness of your saints, continue to inspire us with hope until we all are gathered at your eternal feast. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of abundance,
you cause streams to break forth in the desert
and manna to rain from the heavens.

Accept the gifts you have first given us.
Unite them with the offering of our lives
to nourish the world you love so dearly;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, "This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it for all to drink saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sins. So often as you do this, remember me."

Once you've taken the elements say, "Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Communion Prayer

Sending Song

"Blessed Assurance"

#638

Blessing

People of God,
you are Christ's body,
bringing new life to a suffering world.
The holy Trinity, † one God,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements:

QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT OCTOBER 2021

REVENUE

Year to date, September 30, 2021:	\$202,450
Budgeted through September 30, 2021	\$248,963
Revenue Deficit:	\$46,513

The monthly income needed to meet our budget is \$27,662. Over the past 9 months our average monthly revenue is \$22,494, a decrease of \$2133/month compared to this time last year. Year to date we are showing a decrease in revenue of \$19,195 from last year. Due to decreased revenue, we have used all of our operating funds and are now \$16,245 into our line of credit with Charter Bank.

EXPENSES

Year to date, September 30th, 2021:	\$231,569
Mortgage principal payments YTD:	\$3,291
Budgeted through September 30th, 2021:	\$248,963
Expense favorable:	\$14,103

DEBT:

Our mortgage balance is \$185,828 with a monthly payment of \$1,113. The loan with the Endowment Fund is currently \$17,966 with a monthly interest payment of \$75. The loan balance is due in November unless we can re-negotiate new terms.

OVERVIEW

Pastor Josh recently sent out a quarterly letter explaining the need for a special drive to help us through these difficult times. Historically, we have responded positively to these drives which have enabled us to not only continue our ministries but begin the new year on a positive note. Please consider a 13th month gift to support our church.

Thank you for your generosity and God Bless!

Lauri Rometti, Treasurer

The St. Olaf Band will be at Grace Lutheran Church Thursday, Oct. 21 at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$10 at the door or call 800-363-5487.

If you would like to have flowers on the altar, please call the church office – 715-834-2959.

Bring your cloth items for Savers by Nov. 10.