

February 20th Worship – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
Introduction to the Day

Mercy. Mercy. Mercy. Joseph lives it in Egypt. Jesus preaches it in the gospel. The Spirit guides us into merciful lives with the power of forgiveness to reconcile what is fractured and divided. Such merciful living is the baptismal blessing of having put on Christ. It is the gift of the life-giving Spirit. It is a reflection of God's glory revealed in Christ.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who creates us,
redeems us,
and calls us by name.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we have sinned against you
and your beloved children.**

**We have turned our faces away from your glory
when it did not appear as we expected.**

We have rejected your word

when it made us confront ourselves.

**We have failed to show hospitality
to those you called us to welcome.**

**Accept our repentance for the things we have
done and the things we have left undone.
For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.
Forgive us and lead us, that we may bathe
in the glory of your Son born among us,
and reflect your love for all creation.**

Amen.

Rejoice in this good news:

In † Christ Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

You are descendants of the Most High,
adopted into the household of Christ,
and inheritors of eternal life.

Live as freed and forgiven children of God.

Amen.

Gathering Song

“All Creatures, Worship God Most High”

#835 vs. 1,4,6

Prayer of the Day

O Lord Jesus, make us instruments of your peace, that where there is hatred, we may sow love, where there is injury, pardon, and where there is despair, hope. Grant, O divine master, that we may seek to console, to understand, and to love in your name, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lesson – Genesis 45:3-11, 15

³Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

⁴Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Come closer to me.” And they came closer. He said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. ⁶For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. ⁷God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. ⁸So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. ⁹Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. ¹⁰You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. ¹¹I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.’” ¹⁵And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Gospel – Luke 6:27-38

[Jesus said:] ²⁷“But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³²“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

³⁷“Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

Message

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

These texts get at one of two basic tenets of our beliefs in this life of faith.

We so frequently talk about God's grace and how it urges us to treat others with those same acts of “here is this thing that you might not feel like you deserve” that God shows us, but we rarely discuss the other.

God's mercy.

We see it first in our lesson from Genesis as Joseph encounters brothers. Remember, these brothers in their jealousy sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. They expected to never see him again and to cover their tails they bring his bloodied cloak to their dad to get him to buy their story. They didn't expect to hear, “I am Joseph.”

And they were left stunned. And we can all, I imagine, relate to what they likely felt next. I'm sure we've all been, to some degree, caught having done something wrong. And in that moment, when the person we've wronged approaches us, we think we know how they are going to respond, so we can feel what they are feeling when Brother Joseph gestures, “come over here.”

Anyone who is a sibling has likely experienced this. Whether it is playing with a sibling's toy, perhaps breaking it, or as simple as being in their space, you've likely experience those sibling moments. So, you know that “come over here” that Joseph is giving to his brothers.

But, he shows them mercy.

When I was about 5 years old we got new cedar siding on our house. Throughout the process there would be chunks of siding laying around the yard, and my 3 years older brother Jake, my best friend (still – even after this story), picked up one of those pieces of siding and frisbeed it across the yard. It struck me right smack dab in the middle of the forehead. I ran into the house crying and not far after me was Jacob, who was also crying, because he thought he had killed me. And, I'm fairly certain the extent of his punishment was a gentle, “we maybe shouldn't do that.”

That's mercy.

Years later Jacob and I worked in the Luther Park kitchen together and during one of the summer meals, as I gazed out into the full dining hall as I felt what I thought was a bee on my calf. As I swatted it, I discovered it was a sheet pan that had just come out of the oven, and I looked to see an unmatched grin on Jacob's face stating, "I wanted to see if it was hot." Somehow by the grace of God I kept from putting that sheet pan up side of his head.

That is mercy.

God's mercy is NOT receiving those things that we DO deserve.

Jesus in our Gospel text calls us into a life of mercy.

"But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. Do to others as you would have them do to you."

We are so used to receiving God's grace, and the challenges that come with it, i.e. admitting that God does indeed see us as being worthy of God's love, that we rarely think of what it means to receive God's mercy.

Mercy is a bit messier than grace. We can live out God's grace and show it to others simply by tipping a server at a restaurant double what we normally would. We don't know them or where or not they deserve it, but we give it anyway.

But living out God's mercy and showing it to others? That is hard and holy work. When is the last time you loved an enemy? Prayed for someone who wronged you? Gave your shirt to someone who stole your coat?

It is so much easier in life to hold a grudge. To get revenge. To blame. But, as a speaker at the conference I was at last weekend stated, "In the Body of Christ, don't be the butt."

She is right.

Christ calls us in this Gospel text to be the heart, the hands, and the feet of the Body of Christ. But, not the hands that hit back or the feet that kick but, the heart that loves and tells the hands and feet how to get out and do the work of showing God's mercy in the world.

As a child I really wanted to throw a board twice as large back at my brother, and I really wanted get him upside both side of his head with a sheet pan, but what would that accomplish?

We are called not just to seek peace, and pray for peace, and hope for peace, but to be instruments of peace. To do the work to create peace.

People of God, this is Holy Work. Holy Work that God in Christ Jesus calls us into and sends us out to do in the world.

Thanks be to God. Amen

Song of the Day

"You Are Holy"

#525 twice

Apostle's Creed

Prayers

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

You teach us to love our neighbors and enemies alike. Encourage your church to follow the leading of your love, especially when it is risky or difficult. Help us to show mercy just as we have first received mercy. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Nurture fields that lie dormant, resting until it is time to bloom again. Bless farmers and all who cultivate fields and urban gardens. Give favorable weather for planting. Bring forth from buried seed an abundant harvest, and guard against famine and disease. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Look upon our world with mercy, that we delight in an abundance of peace. Protect all whose lives are marred by war and civil unrest. Release political prisoners and amplify the voices that challenge us to seek forgiveness and pursue nonviolence. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Your people cry out for mercy. Console hearts that long for forgiveness. Mend broken relationships. Heal bodies that suffer chronic pain or illness. Strengthen and deliver all whose spirits are troubled (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob and Joanne Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, David Gunderson, Cassie Skinner, Keith Franson, Frank and Heather Garber, Sherm and Mary Toufar*).). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You bind us together into one family. Teach us to forgive one another and to resolve conflicts with humility and patience. Bless families of all shapes and sizes, and show love to those who are lonely or grieving. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We praise you for the saints who have inherited the fullness of your kingdom (*especially*). As you have raised them to imperishable and eternal life, sustain us in faith by the promise of resurrection. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Blessed are you, O God,

Sovereign of the universe.

You offer us new beginnings

and guide us on our journey.

Lead us to your table,

nourish us with this heavenly food,

and prepare us to carry your love

to a hungry world,

in the name of Christ our light.

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, We give you thanks, gracious God, for we have feasted on the abundance of your house. Send us to bring good news and to proclaim your favor to all, strengthened with the richness of your grace in your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Lord’s Prayer

Communion Prayer

Sending Song **“We Are Called”** **#720**

Blessing

God, who leads you in pathways of righteousness,
who rejoices over you,
and who calls you by name,
✠ bless your going out and your coming in,
today and forever.

Amen.

Go with Christ into a weary world. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd 2022 Leadership Team

President: Lacy Sahr

Vice-President: Emily Barth

Secretary: Jo Anderson

Treasurer: Brad Barth

Ross Clay, Chuck Cramer, Mike Huggins, Laura Johnson,

Matt Risen, Mike Patten, Maryssa Whitman

We still have 2 vacancies that will be appointed by Leadership. If you are interested in being a part of this team, please contact one of these members.

Music Ministries at Good Shepherd

Choir rehearses and sings every other Sunday. Rehearsal is before worship at 8 am. If they didn’t sing this week, they’ll be rehearsing and singing next week.

Bell Choir rehearses Tuesday evenings and plays in worship the first Sunday of every month.

We are ALWAYS looking to welcome new voices and ringers.

Talk to Sue Kramer for more information!

Empty Bowls Week

Feed My People Food Bank’s largest annual fundraiser to support our neighbors in need one bowl at a time.

Ticket packages range from \$20-\$40

Drive thru to pick up your bowl Gift Box on March 2.

Online Silent Auction featuring artwork, experience packages and more.

Give.fmpfoodbank.org/emptybowlsweek