

Second Sunday After Pentecost
June 19, 2022

Introduction to the Day

This Sunday's texts paint startling pictures of the horrific nature of sin. The church's repeated celebration of holy communion counters that tragic reality in a continued showing forth of the death of Jesus until he comes again. It is a dramatic declaration of "how much God has done for you."

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Merciful God,
**we confess that we have not followed your path
but have chosen our own way.
Instead of putting others before ourselves,
we long to take the best seats at the table.**

**When met by those in need,
we have too often passed by on the other side.
Set us again on the path of life.
Save us from ourselves
and free us to love our neighbors.**

Amen.

Hear the good news!
God does not deal with us according to our sins
but delights in granting pardon and mercy.
In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are
forgiven.
You are free to love as God loves.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn “Rise, Shine, You People”

#665 vs. 1,3,4

Greeting

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

Reading: Galatians 3:23-29

²³Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Luke 8:26-39

²⁶Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me”—
²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

³²Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. ³⁵Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. ³⁶Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. ³⁷Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. ³⁸The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹“Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

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

We are all thinking right now about the demons entering the herd of swine and casting them off of the cliff. Right? In that whole 13 verse Gospel text, that is what we hear. And rightfully so. It is an incredible attention grabber.

But. And, there is always a but.

Is that what this Gospel text is *really* about?

Before AND after this occurrence, there are some pretty big things that take place. First, before the demons enter the herd of swine, they *beg* Jesus, seeing the herd of swine nearby, to *let* them enter the herd. And, Jesus *gives* them permission.

That would make for a great sermon on the power that Jesus holds, that even the demons who had been taken out of the man would beg Jesus in how he will deal with them, and he would give them permission to enter the herd.

Following this, we hear of what happens with those who had been watching over the herd. The swineherd (shepherds but for swine) ran and told what had happened in the city and the country. People came from all over to see what had happened, only to find the formerly possessed man sitting at Jesus feet, clothed and in his right mind. It was a story of incredible healing, truly a “you had to see it to believe it” experience.

The story was so unbelievable that the people asked Jesus to leave, because they were seized with fear. The man who had been healed, knowing that it was actually him that they were afraid of, begged Jesus to take him with, but instead, Jesus gives him a mission. “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.”

There is a sermon in there for sure. An incredible sermon, really, about how God would use even this man who had been possessed by demons to now go and tell of all that God has done.

But there is more at play here. People of God, I know we want to focus on the herd of swine being thrown from the cliff, but I don't think that is what the Good News is in this Gospel text.

How does this text begin?

²⁶Then [Jesus and his disciples] arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. ²⁷As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. ²⁸When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me"—²⁹for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) ³⁰Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. ³¹They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

Jesus is approached on the shore by a homeless naked man who was possessed by demons. The man BEGS Jesus not to torment him for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

This man, in his vulnerability, approaches Jesus demanding his unworthiness.

And the Good News, is that this is a Gospel text of Jesus' unrelenting grace.

So often, we too, would beg like this man begs. So often we look at our own stories and experiences and are certain that God's grace in Jesus Christ would not torment us. But it does.

We come to God with our own stories, our own experiences, our own disqualifications, demanding and certain that this is not for us. But the love of God in Jesus Christ torments us. It demands a place. It dwells within us and we return to it again and again and again.

Now, the call in this story is twofold. Yes, we say these things and see our own unworthy more often than not, but it is also about how we see our neighbor. While we are really good and seeing and claiming our own unworthy, we are even better at looking at the unworthiness of those around us.

As we learn more and more about our neighbors' stories, the shackles we have placed upon them become tighter and the guard we put up becomes greater.

And, we are reminded in this Gospel text that the love of God in Jesus Christ isn't about that life. In fact it is the opposite. The love of God in Jesus Christ in this story goes out to the man who lived in his life naked in the tombs for he was ashamed.

The Love of God in Jesus Christ torments the feelings of unworthiness and says "this is, indeed, for you."

Jesus, in asking this man for his name, gives him worth. Jesus, in asking this man for his name, gives him purpose. Jesus, in asking this man for his name, gives him a place in God's story.

People of God, let us hear that same promise for ourselves, no matter what we or society might tell us to the contrary.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Song of the Day

"Baptized and Set Free"

#453

Baptism of Messiah Xoing-Simmons, son of Terve Xoing and Andrea Simmons. His sponsors are Whitney and Brandon Larson.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

Holy God, you hear the cries of those who seek you. Equip your church with evangelists who reveal the continuous call of your outstretched hands and your promises of a home in you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You hear the cries of the earth. Restore places where land, air, and waterways have been harmed. Guide us to develop and implement sources of energy and food production that do not destroy the earth. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You hear the cries of those who are marginalized or cast out. On this Juneteenth observance, guide us continually toward the end of oppression in all its forms, especially white supremacy. Bring true freedom and human flourishing to all your beloved children. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You hear the cries of those who suffer. Come to the aid of all who are homeless, naked, hungry, and sick (*especially for Gena, Peyton, Matt, Bob and Joanne, Jim and Sandy, Bob, Joe, Bill and Bonnie, David, Cassie, Keith and JoJo, Sherm and Mary, Frank and Heather, Verna, Bob and Sonja, Irene, Kathy, Val, Jacob*). Bring peace to any experiencing mental illness, that they can clearly recognize your loving presence. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

You hear the cries of those who celebrate and those who grieve on this Father's Day. Nurture mutual love and tender care in all relationships. Comfort those for whom this day brings sadness or longing. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for the faithful departed whose lives proclaimed all you had done for them (*especially*). At the last, unite us with them as we make our home in you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of abundance:

you have set before us a plentiful harvest.
As we feast on your goodness,
strengthen us to labor in your field,
and equip us to bear fruit for the good of all,
in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Communion

Prayer

Life-giving God,
through this meal you have bandaged our wounds
and fed us with your mercy.
Now send us forth to live for others,
both friend and stranger,
that all may come to know your love.
This we pray in the name of Jesus.
Amen.

Blessing

The God of peace,
Father,  Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you, comfort you,
and show you the path of life
this day and always.

Amen.

Sending Song

“Blessed Assurance”

#638 vs. 1,3

Dismissal

Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

Thanks be to God.

If you have prayer requests or needs that we can help with, please contact any one of us.
pastorlcgsec@gmail.com, lcgseaulaire@gmail.com and annechyf18@gmail.com.