

Third Sunday After Pentecost
June 26, 2022

Introduction to the Day

We have no good apart from God. That makes Jesus' call to follow him an invitation to freedom. This is freedom to revel in the Spirit's fruit: love, joy, peace, and patience. This is freedom to not be imprisoned by anything that would keep us from the fullness of the life God has given us. This is the path of life.

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 “Will You Come and Follow Me” #798 vs. 1,2,4,5

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

Sovereign God, ruler of all hearts, you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: Galatians 5:1, 13-25

¹For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. ¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, ²¹envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Luke 9:51-62

⁵¹When the days drew near for [Jesus] to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; ⁵³but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them. ⁵⁶Then they went on to another village.

⁵⁷As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." ⁵⁸And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ⁵⁹To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ⁶⁰But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." ⁶¹Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." ⁶²Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

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.

This Gospel text is one that leaves us unsettled. Jesus calls on those who wish to be his followers to do things that leave us feeling uncomfortable.

We are left feeling uncomfortable because we so often concern ourselves with doing things the right way, or what we believe to be the right way. The characters that we see in this Gospel text are doing just that.

First, James and John, when they encounter the Samaritan village that doesn't welcome them. They *think* they know how Jesus is going to respond. "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" They're so certain how Jesus will react that they want to make it known how right they are. They anticipate hearing the Wyatt Earp in Tombstone, "you tell 'em the law's coming. You tell 'em I'm coming. And hell's coming with me."

But. They're wrong. Jesus instead rebukes them. And they move along to another village.

Along the way 3 times they encounter would be followers.

First, someone calling out proclaiming their desires, "I will go wherever you go." Jesus responds in riddle, with neither a yes or a no, and has something to say about fox holes and bird nests.

Seeing another eager member of the crowd Jesus proclaims, "follow me." This person is willing, "but first let me go and bury my father." Again, in riddle form Jesus says neither yes or no.

Finally, a third, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say farewell to my family." Jesus' riddle starts to creep a bit towards no, but doesn't explicitly state it.

This riddle-like approach is a bit of what leaves us so unsettled, but also the start reality of the picture Jesus paints of what it will look like to follow him.

Simply put, you're either in, or you're out. And it isn't a hokey pokey in, where it's one foot in then out, it is a fully committed, fully on board, all in kind of life.

Jesus doesn't want followers who do what they do because it is the right things to do, Jesus wants followers who do what they do because it is the Jesus things to do. Jesus questions his would be followers for not having taken care of the duties that should have already been taken care of.

We do this a lot. Perhaps more than we realize. The hesitancy to follow Jesus all in for us today looks like the concern we might have about what others might think of our brand of following Jesus. We so often concern ourselves with what others might think of us that we fake our way through following Jesus so we can say we did it.

We think we know how Jesus would act – like James and John – and we are so concerned with that that our following Jesus turns into making sure we're doing it the right way, being right, and making right. All while not necessarily following Jesus.

Jesus, and the stark reality that he paints for us, is after the “all-in” followers. A Jesus life is about Jesus. Not when it is convenient or feels right, but always. Not one foot in and the other out, but both feet fully in.

Matt Skinner, professor at Luther Seminary, writes “We concern ourselves with the right way. Jesus calls us to himself. He calls people to take on a new identity. One fully embodied and defined by Christ himself.”

Jesus knows that we're going to make our excuses. Jesus knows that there are going to be those things that will cause us to turn back. Those things that will keep us from fully committing, but the picture Jesus paints for us is a picture of what biblical calling looks like.

Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, gets it. To follow Jesus isn't to cave to those worldly things and desires of the flesh. Rather, it is to live by the fruits of the Spirit, and let those guide how we go about our everyday lives. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self Control. And, don't just live by those things, live by them instead of, in place of, in spite of those worldly desires that are oh so tempting.

People of God, to follow Jesus is to follow in a way that may very well raise some eyebrows of those around us. That is what God calls us to. A life of radical love. A life of radical grace. A life of radical hospitality.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Song of the Day “Baptized and Set Free” \$453

Baptism of Evelyn Dawn Buckley, daughter of Brett Buckley and Weiwei Song. Her sponsors are Erik and Priscilla Buckley and Dan Hendel.

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.

God of faithfulness, set the face of your church firmly on you. Rooted in your self-giving love, may the church find freedom in loving our neighbors. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of gentleness, strengthen the earth's ability to heal. Where there are dangerous storms, bring calm. Where there are destructive fires, bring rain. Protect homes, habitats, and livelihoods threatened by climate disasters.

God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of peace, guide all who govern, that they place the good of their citizens above self-promotion. Anoint leaders of nations with your Spirit of neighborly love. Protect refugees and all who live under tyranny or conflict (*especially*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of kindness, reveal your healing presence to all who are sick or dying (*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*). Uphold those who grieve. Support the needs of any who are unemployed, hungry, or have nowhere to lay their heads. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of love, attend to those struggling with addiction, depression, or uncontrolled anger. Provide support systems and loving companions as they work toward health, that they may rest in hope and know the fullness of joy in your presence. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

God of joy, we give thanks for all who have died and now celebrate the inheritance of life in you. Keep their examples of faithfulness always before us, that we trust your promises in life and in death. 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**“What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”****#774****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.

pastorlgsec@gmail.com, lgseauclaire@gmail.com and annecyf18@gmail.com or call the church office at 715-834-2959.