

Eighth Sunday After Pentecost
July 31, 2022

Introduction to the Day

Today's texts offer instruction and encouragement for all who are occasionally overwhelmed by the "unhappy business" of life. Jesus urges us to take care and be on guard against all kinds of greed. We who have died with Christ in holy baptism have also been raised with him and are encouraged to elevate our thinking, seeking the "things that are above." To that end we seek the sustenance of the Lord's supper and the encouragement of God's word.

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

Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives. Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you, and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

⁵Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). ⁶On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. ⁷These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. ⁸But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. ¹¹In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Luke 12:13-21

¹³Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus,] “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” ¹⁴But he said to him, “Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” ¹⁶Then he told them a parable: “The land of a rich man produced abundantly. ¹⁷And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ ¹⁸Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward 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.

Regarding this topic of greed, I’ve pondered this question, and there is a basic assumption in asking this question that each and every one of us, at some point, have at least been a little bit greedy. If not, you’ve at the very least come close to greedy, but chose otherwise, and the question I ask is this:

Do you find yourself feeling more greedy when things are really good, or when times are tough?

Jesus, in response to the Rich Man asking about splitting his inheritance with his brother, tells a parable – a story – of a man whose land produced abundantly, and in this time of abundance, this man became greedy. He build larger barns and stored up all of his goods for a later time. Some of you might think this was a smart idea. After all, preparing for when times are tough doesn’t seem like a bad idea.

But, I’d imagine that most of us can relate more easily to when times are tough. We all know that when times get tough our grip on the things that are ours gets tighter. We also know that greed isn’t the only force acting in these moments. In fact, there are many others.

Fear. When times are difficult and we are unsure how we are going to pay the next bill that comes due we become afraid. We close in ourselves and look out for those around us.

Self-preservation. When times are difficult we move ourselves way to the front of the list in terms of who we look after and who we make sure has what they need.

And soon, we find ourselves making excuses for our greed. And we all do it. This is certainly not me sitting here scolding you. Greed, to varying degrees, is something we are all guilty of.

The tricky thing when we discuss greed, is that we automatically go to our wealth. And, perhaps, understandably so. It is important to notice in this story that Jesus tells, that he does go after the fact that the man has an abundance. He doesn’t go after his wealth at all. Sure, he criticizes this mans desire to store it all up, hoard it if you wall, but he doesn’t shame this man for being rich, as it seems other times he might.

Rather, he goes after the Rich Man’s actions.

First. Jesus uses this story to tell those who are listening that as followers of Jesus, they can’t be lazy. The Rich Man was ready to lay back poolside, sip on some cocktails, and relax. “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you!”

You might argue here that the problem Jesus has with this man is not only that he has gathered up his earthly possessions for himself, but that in doing so he thinks he can coast his way through life.

And Jesus is none too fond of that approach.

Yes, Jesus does explicitly warn against “all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions,” but that doesn’t seem to be his main sticking point.

Jesus in this parable (and all of his ministry) is focused on how this man acts towards his neighbor. Towards the other. When we start to look at the abundance of things that we possess we start to do it through the lens of what our neighbor has or doesn’t have, and what they demand from us. We are sometimes quick to think that our neighbor’s troubles are not for us to worry about, and the life events that got our less fortunate neighbors into the position they are in, and we are forget that we are called to care for them.

We put up our walls and make our excuses why those problems aren’t for us to fix, and we go on with our lives eating, drinking, and being merry.

But. Jesus calls us into action for our neighbor.

Our reading from Colossians reminds us that in Christ those divisions don’t exist. Rather, Christ is all and in all.

Does it change our hearing of this Good News if we realize that the person sitting next to us, or the person this text calls us to care for, is the image of God? That is Jesus last word in this parable, his last warning. “So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.” And to think, God is our neighbor. We see the image of God in the face of the homeless and the hungry. The marginalized and the minoritized.

And we still tell ourselves, “but that won’t be me. I’m prepared. I’ve stored up that which I need.”

Years ago at a JONAH gathering our speaker shared with a gathering of religious leaders that 56% of people are one major life event away from living below the poverty line. 56%.

Does it change our way of hearing this story, and thinking of our possessions, to realize that more than half of the people in our community are one catastrophic life event away from living in poverty. It should. That is what the Gospel does. It changes us.

That is what Jesus is getting at when in his story, God says, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.”

Jesus challenges our perceptions of the world around us.

Jesus calls us into action for our neighbor.

And he calls us into joyful generosity.

So often we struggle to get ourselves out of a mindset of scarcity with a concern for what we don’t have, that we fail to live into the life of abundance that God has blessed us with.

And that is the Good News here. We live a life abundantly blessed by the love of God in Jesus Christ. As people of faith we are called to live out that love, and make it known, in the world around us. Don’t be bogged down with concern for what others might think, or how others got into the situation they’re in. Rather, go about life living the love that God so abundantly gives. And, no matter your socioeconomic status, go and do something for your neighbor, because you never know if they are a part of that 56%.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

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

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

O God, you are wholeness. Where there is division in your church, bring reconciliation and healing. Guide the work of theologians, Sunday school teachers, seminary professors, and all who provide instruction for the building up of your church. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you are the source of all life. Where creation cries out in distress, bring relief and renewal. Bless farmers, ranchers, distributors, and all who provide our food. Nourish the land and all its habitants. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you are wisdom. Where nations and communities yearn for peace, bring justice. Strengthen those who toil for the welfare of others, especially military personnel, police, first responders, and activists, and for the healing of the nations. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you are life. Where your people are overwhelmed with the busy-ness of life, bring encouragement. Accompany all who experience emotional, mental, or physical distress (*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*). Renew us at your table of mercy. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you are our treasure. Where scarcity and anxiety pervade your church, bring abundance and vitality. Guide the work of church councils and committees and give them clarity for the work of ministry in this place (*specific ministries may be named*). Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

O God, you are resurrection. We give you thanks for all your saints (*especially*). Inspire us by their example of faithful living to set our minds on things above and to be rich in love toward you. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

Amen.

Offering

Please see the graphic at the end of the worship packet for a snapshot of our current finances. With July being one of our most difficult months, both in expenses and revenue, there was much concern. Thanks to your generosity we were able to not only come out even, but we will be able to make a dent in the gap we've been chipping away at throughout the year. We continue to ask that you prayerfully consider a Bridge the Gap gift as we look at one more summer month before getting back into the program year in the fall.

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 vs. 1,3

Dismissal

Go in peace. Love your neighbor.

Thanks be to God.

Financial Snapshot

Where We Stand

Revenue as of July 20: **\$28,781**

How We Got it Done

Regular Giving: **\$22,400**

Bridge the Gap Giving: **\$1,600**

Building Use Donations: **\$5,000**

Other Gifts

\$4,000 towards Line of Credit

What Remains in July

Expenses this July:

\$28,330 with no more to come

What does that mean?

This Sunday's offering is 100%

Bridging the Gap!

So, how much of the gap
will we close?

The Good Shepherd Worship Team will be leading in the park this Sunday!

We have been notified that Pastor Chuck Gavin has passed away. Visitation will be August 6 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. with a service at 1 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church. There will not be a lunch served.

Ruby's Pantry will be here NEXT Thursday, August 4. The truck comes at approximately 2:30 with distribution 3:30-5:30 p.m. Come and volunteer or come and purchase a share. If you have questions, give the office a call.

Church Office Hours

Please be aware that the hours for the church office will now be 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

**If you have prayer requests or needs that we can help with, please contact one of us.
pastorlgsec@gmail.com or lgseauclaire@gmail.com.**