

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost
August 7th, 2022

Introduction to the Day

Jesus says, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” It is God’s promise from the beginning—to Abraham, to the early church, and to the “little flock” of which we are a part in today’s assembly. Faith, God’s baptismal gift, trusts the promises of God. Have no fear.

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

Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your church. Open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may be ready to receive you wherever you appear, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16

¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

¹³All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, ¹⁴for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Luke 12:32-40

[Jesus said:] ³²“Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

³⁵“Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; ³⁶be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

³⁹“But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

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.

At first reading there seems to be a bit of a disconnect between the two sections of this Gospel text.

The first section starts out with Jesus offering assurance to a crowd that we get a sense may be a touch fearful of what their future looks like. It does us good to look back and see just what it is that Jesus has been saying to them that may have them feeling this way.

Last Sunday was Jesus telling them a parable of a Rich Man’s greed. In his story, Jesus doesn’t so much rail against that this man was rich, he essentially doesn’t mention his possessions at all, but he does go after his actions. It is Jesus approach that one can, indeed, be rich, but one cannot, indeed, be lazy. That is not what the Kingdom of God asks of us.

Jesus goes on, in the section of Luke 12 that we do not hear in our Sunday texts, to tell his followers not to worry. In fact, worrying will do nothing for you! We remember that the feelings in which our greed is rooted, are feelings rooted in worry. Our greed stems from fear and self-preservation.

Jesus tells them not to worry. Look at the birds of the air. They don’t build up barns, yet, they eat. Are we not more important than birds?

So, Jesus offers a word of comfort. A message of the assurances of God’s love. “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Seeing the concern on their faces regarding what it will mean to live out this life that he has called them to, Jesus speaks into their fear and hesitancy to live a life of joyful generosity.

Jesus takes a leap now to what it means to be ready. He tells, again, a story. This time the story is of a master and his servants. It is the master’s desire to come and find his servants ready to serve. “Blessed are those servants whom the master finds alert when he comes.” Blessed are those ready to serve.

Going beyond the selected text for this Sunday, to a section that will be skipped in our selected Gospel passages, Jesus offers a stern warning for those who are NOT ready to serve, but also to those who are ready to serve but are boastful about it.

Here Jesus is calling his followers not just to service, but to humble service.

As people of faith we struggle with this call to be readily available to serve God when needed. Just weeks ago Jesus encountered this when there were eager members of the crowd that wanted to be his followers. When he called them they were quick to point out that there were other matters they must take care of first.

We do the same thing. We see an opportunity to serve God by serving our neighbor and we are quick to come up with reasons why we aren't actually the ones called to serve that particular situation.

When talking about opportunities to serve our neighbor that we frequently encounter, we often find ourselves discussing the portion of our population that we will see on the street corner asking for assistance. More often than not, but not always, we turn the other way.

And our reasons are plentiful.

I don't have cash (there are ATMs all over town and the cashback feature is very handy whenever you purchase something).

If I did give them cash they'd spend it on booze (then buy them food).

They're probably scamming me anyways (then ask them their story).

They're sitting right next to a "We're Hiring" sign (yes, and if they walked into that place looking how they look do we really think they'll get hired? And, is their pay going to be enough to keep them off of the street? Let's be honest).

We soon realize that the reasons we can't help them aren't necessarily they're fault, but are a product of the world we live in. Culturally we marginalize those who have significantly less than we do, rather than looking at them with compassion with an eye towards what we can do to help.

And, while it may very well be true that the problems of this world are a product of this world, we must ask ourselves the question:

Does this change what the Gospel is calling me to do?

All of those questions we ask, all of those reasons we give ourselves for why we can't help that person we need, is that what the Gospel calls us to do?

The answer as no.

Jesus says, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." That treasure is in heaven. That is where our heart ought to be set towards as well.

People of faith the call of the Gospel is to go and do the work of the kingdom without hesitation, without questions of why we can't. The call of the Gospel is to go and do the work of the kingdom, and to do so in faith, which is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things NOT seen.

And we are reminded that when that day comes, the Master (Jesus) who finds us ready to serve, will tie his belt around his waste, and invite us to that heavenly feast.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Song of the Day

"Have No Fear, Little Flock"

#764

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.

Let your lovingkindness be upon your church. Fill all who proclaim the gospel with your Spirit. Equip your flock to speak your word of promise and hope in the midst of fear and uncertainty. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Let your lovingkindness be upon your creation. Dwell among us and sustain our earthly home. In places of famine, provide nourishment. In places of plenty, fashion us to be good stewards of your bounty. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Let your lovingkindness be upon your world. Be our helper and our shield in places torn by strife and violence (*especially*). Raise up courageous leaders to govern with compassion and justice. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Let your lovingkindness be upon your children. Look upon all who wait for your steadfast love. Console those who grieve and embrace those who cry out to you (*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*). Help us to trust your promise and not be afraid. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Let your lovingkindness be upon this community. Fashion our hearts to strive for the way of peace. Strengthen the outreach ministries of this congregation (*specific ministries may be named*) and all who care for those in need. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

With thanksgiving we remember all who have died in faith and now rest in you. As they placed their hope in you, so strengthen us to trust in your promise of new life. 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**“Blessed Assurance”****#638****Dismissal**

Go in peace. Love your neighbor.
Thanks be to God.

Financial Snapshot

January - July

Total Revenue **\$178,862**

Total Expenses **\$186,369**

How is the gap looking?

\$16,277 THROUGH APRIL

\$8,443 THROUGH MAY

\$8,409 THROUGH JUNE

\$7,507 THROUGH JULY

How did we do it?

General Offering **\$23,947**

Building Use Gifts **\$5,000**

PLUS...

We had a \$4,000 gift towards paying off our \$25,000 Line of Credit Debt!