

**Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost**  
**September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Introduction to the Day**

As we are invited today to consider what it means to be managers (rather than owners) of all that we have, it is crucial to recognize that we are bought with a price. “Christ Jesus, himself human, . . . gave himself a ransom for all.” Apart from the generosity of God we have nothing—we are nothing. By God’s gracious favor we have everything we need.

**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 “Grace is Enough”**

**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**

God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Reading: Amos 8:4-7**

<sup>4</sup>Hear this, you that trample on the needy,  
and bring to ruin the poor of the land,  
<sup>5</sup>saying, “When will the new moon be over  
so that we may sell grain;  
and the sabbath,  
so that we may offer wheat for sale?  
We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,  
and practice deceit with false balances,  
<sup>6</sup>buying the poor for silver  
and the needy for a pair of sandals,  
and selling the sweepings of the wheat.”  
<sup>7</sup>The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:  
Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Children's Message

### Gospel: Luke 16:1-13

<sup>1</sup>Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. <sup>2</sup>So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management because you cannot be my manager any longer.' <sup>3</sup>Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. <sup>4</sup>I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' <sup>5</sup>So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' <sup>6</sup>He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' <sup>7</sup>Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' <sup>8</sup>And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. <sup>9</sup>And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

<sup>10</sup>"Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. <sup>11</sup>If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? <sup>12</sup>And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? <sup>13</sup>No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

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 is truly a head scratching Gospel text. Jesus is seemingly talking in circles where every moment he comes close to making sense he takes a 90 degree turn away from what we know Jesus to be.

And this starts right away. The parable of the dishonest manager. That word, dishonest, throws us for a loop. It sets the whole story up with the idea that this manager is a bad person. But later we see that the manager is commended, and Jesus even speaks well of those who gain wealth by dishonest means.

Is Jesus really encouraging dishonesty? That seems VERY un-Jesus.

The story continues and we endure a few more rounds of Jesus confusion, until we get to the point that he is trying to make.

We've all been in that situation where you're listening to someone speak, and you get a sense that they are about to make their drive home point, and then they circle back to another example. We've all endured that. Perhaps in worship on Sunday morning.

We get a sense that Jesus realizes that he is rambling. And he realizes. And he decides he better make his point before he completely loses his audience.

Verse 13. "No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

When we take a look back at what Jesus has been teaching, this point becomes even more clear.

Immediately before this text of Jesus rambling, we get the story of the Prodigal Son. A story of a father who's son has squandered his inheritance, has gone AWOL, and they assumed he had died. Upon his return they throw

a party. Much to the dismay of the older brother who has done everything right. The father reminds him, “Your brother who we thought was dead, is alive.” And they rejoice.

Just before that Jesus gives us the story of the woman who loses one of her 10 coins and sweeps the whole home until she finds it. And, when she does, she throws a party. There is rejoicing.

And, before that, the shepherd who loses one of his one hundred sheep. He leaves the 99 to search for the one. And he finds it. And he throws a party. And there is rejoicing.

Jesus tells these stories in the presence of those who are upset by his ministry. The unwanted, unforgivable, and unlovable of society have started to realize that Jesus has a message for them, and they are starting to come around more often.

While there are many other things that this Gospel text could be about, in fact, if we look at the whole of Luke’s Gospel, it does become clear. Remembering Mary’s song, that Jesus would come to bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly, we realize that the dishonest manager is acting in favor of the lowly, those who owe payment to the greedy owner. The dishonest manager sticks his neck out for the betterment of those who don’t have it as good as him.

While it takes a while to get to that realization, one thing is certain, those who worship their status are doing it wrong. Those who challenged Jesus found great value in their perceived societal status. They were recognized and held places of honor. So much so that they began to place their worth in that, and their worth became a god.

Jesus says no. You simply cannot do that.

Our worth is not found in human things, it is found in Christ. You can not serve your earthly idea of wealth and status, and serve God. You can have wealth and serve God, but if your wealth is your god, then you are doing it wrong.

Jesus does something Jesus rarely does with this info. He praises the “children of that generation.” So often in scripture we hear of the naivety, the unknowing, of the people who sat at Jesus feet listening to every word that came out of his mouth. And, in doing so, we applaud ourselves because we know what he means. We are the children of the light. We have the benefit of 2000 years of the story being told.

But here it is different. Today, this message is spoken directly to us. The people who heard what Jesus had to say knew that it was a word for them. The unlovable, the unforgivable, the unwanted, knew that Jesus had a message for them. And, Jesus knew that we, the children of the light, would one day place more value in our status, our wealth, those things that we hold at a godly level, that we would forget where we find our true worth.

People of God, this is a warning for us today. When we so often worry ourselves with who can and cannot have those things we so freely enjoy, Jesus warns us. This is for all. Don’t worry yourselves with the cost of offering it to all, simply worry that all would receive it.

We can not serve God AND wealth. We can serve God and be wealthy. We can serve God with wealth.

But, if we serve our wealth and worship our wealth, it will be difficult to also serve God.

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**

As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God’s good creation.

God our Savior, you keep your church in faith and truth. Accompany those preparing for baptism or affirmation of baptism. Enlighten preachers, teachers, seminarians, and all those who share your good news with the world.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Divine teacher, you instruct your children to be responsible stewards of your creation. Show us how best to care for the earth and its resources, and guide those who work to develop sustainable practices. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Ruler of the nations, you direct those in authority. Give leaders wisdom and compassion so that all may live in peace. Inspire public servants to follow the example of courageous leaders (*especially Dag Hammarskjöld*) and safeguard the dignity of each person. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Helper of the needy, you lift up those who are oppressed. Breathe justice into economic and social systems that perpetuate poverty and hunger. Sustain food ministries, clothing banks, and emergency shelters (*local outreach may be named*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Sustainer and giver of life, you bless this congregation with abundance. Instruct us in the proper and faithful use of wealth and resources, that we share generously. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of glory, you gather your saints around your throne. Keep us thankful for the witness of those who have gone before us (*especially*), and bring us with them to the heavenly feast that has no end. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

## **Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

Gracious God,  
in your great love you richly provide for our needs.  
Make of these gifts a banquet of blessing,  
and make us ready to share with all in need;  
through Jesus Christ, who sets a table for all.  
**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**

God of the abundant table,  
you have refreshed our hearts in this meal  
with bread for the journey.  
Give us your grace on the road  
that we might serve our neighbors with joy;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **Blessing**

God, who gives life to all things  
and frees us from despair,  
bless you with truth and peace.  
And may the holy Trinity, † one God,  
guide you always in faith, hope, and love.  
**Amen.**

## **Sending Song**

**“The Only Name (Yours Will Be)”**

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.  
**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!**  
And all of Good Shepherd said,  
**AMEN!**

### **Caregiver Presentation Sept. 24, 10 a.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church**

Trinity Lutheran Church is thinking strategically and organizationally about how to extend intentional support to caregivers within our congregations. We are dedicated to being agents of God's healing. Our mission to care and to heal calls us to recognize the communal nature of suffering, healing, and wholeness. We often extend caring to someone who is ill or struggling, but how might we extend our ministries with the caregivers who are often overlooked or neglected? Join Allison Breininger, Caregiver Advocate and Founder of The Negative Space as she provides us with meaningful strategies, tools, and language that we can use to love our neighbors in their hardest moments. All are welcome.

**“Calling all Artists”**, to share their form of “Art” at an Arts Fellowship Event. This event is the collaboration of six ELCA churches in Eau Claire. The event will be held on Reformation Sunday, October 30, from 1 to 4 p.m., at Hope Lutheran Church. Each church will have a music group sharing an anthem and 2 to 3 artists to display their art work. Art has been defined but not limited to: painting's, wood carving, pottery, sculpture, rosemaling, photography, jewelry, batik, and stained glass. If you are interested or you have questions, please see Sue Kramer, or leave a message with the church office and she'll get back to you.