

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost
October 23rd, 2022

Introduction to the Day

Genuine repentance and pretentious piety stand in stark contrast in the gospel and all around us. All creation stands in need of God's forgiveness. Keep the faith. God's people shall be accounted righteous for Jesus' sake. Our God is merciful to sinners. For this we worship and glorify God forever.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who is eager to forgive
and who loves us beyond our days.

Amen.

Dear friends, together let us acknowledge
our failure to love this world as Jesus does.
Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
we confess that sin still has a hold on us.
We have harmed your good creation.
We have failed to do justice,
love kindness,
and walk humbly with you.

Turn us in a new direction.

Show us the path that leads to life.

Be our refuge and strength on the journey,
through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.

Amen.

Beloved of God:

your sins are forgiven † and you are made whole.

God points the way to new life in Christ,
who meets us on the road.

Journey now in God's abiding love
through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn **“Rise, Shine, You People!”**

#665

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

Holy God, our righteous judge, daily your mercy surprises us with everlasting forgiveness. Strengthen our hope in you, and grant that all the peoples of the earth may find their glory in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

⁶As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

¹⁶At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Gospel: Luke 18:9-14

⁹[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt:¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

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 parable sets a trap. Matthew Skinner – Professor at Luther Seminary writes, “Whenever we want to be critical of one of the characters or distinguish ourselves and our values clearly from one of them, the parable expresses the disdain we harbor. What is disdain? It is the manifestation of a belief that we know better than God who should receive mercy and how they should receive it.”

We all experienced that feeling reading this Gospel parable. As we read it we found ourselves thinking, “I don’t want to be that person that looks at someone else and says ‘I don’t want to be like that person.’”

Did you catch that?

I don’t want to be the type of person that looks at someone else and thinks, “I don’t want to be like them.”

You realize what is happening, yes?

And the crazy part is we do it all the time.

And Jesus warns against it.

This parable involves, again, characters that the hearers of this story can easily relate to.

The Pharisees were a Jewish movement that emphasized the importance of obedience to the law of Moses. Living in accordance with torah was a way of making God’s benefits visible and accessible in all aspects of life for all who were Jewish. The Pharisee in this parable was not wrong in stating that they had fasted and given 10% of their income. The Pharisee *was* righteous in that regard. Pharisees were, perhaps, even a level of devotion that many of the Jewish faith strived for. And that is not what Jesus has a problem with.

The tax collector, too, is a character that the crowd could relate to. As Jesus goes along in his story you can imagine the crowd happily nodding along in agreement with how these characters are introduced. You can imagine the crowd almost scoffing at the mention of the Tax Collectors, because they were evil people. They were dirty. They were modern day crooks in how they came about their wealth.

And, to this point in the story, the crowd is likely in agreement with how this all plays out. Until we, again, remember the why of the story that Jesus explicitly states. “[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt.”

To this point in the story Jesus is setting the table for his argument. His argument is an argument for the expansive nature of God’s grace and mercy. His argument is for a people that don’t concern themselves with others, but realize that which they have to be thankful for, but also what needs forgiving.

Jesus didn't have a problem with the Pharisee stating that which he has done to be righteous, but he does have a problem with him praising God for not making him like *those* people.

Jesus doesn't have a problem extending grace and forgiveness to the Tax Collector who is fully aware of what he has done wrong, but it doesn't mean Jesus is okay with those things.

For every *them* that you don't want to be like, there is an embrace of God's grace and mercy.

We forget that.

We find ourselves just over two weeks out from an election.

I find myself feeling this feeling of disdain every single time I drive down Clairemont Avenue, which is multiple times daily. Every single time I drive by the large signs that aren't ideologically aligned with me, or see a bumper sticker that boils my blood, I find myself feeling the very feelings that Jesus warns against.

And the crazy part of these feelings is that each and every one of those signs or stickers that has me feeling those feelings is a person who would like at signs or stickers that I might display and think to themselves, "can you believe this guy? And he gets to be a pastor? At a church? And people listen to him?"

And we see the trap of this parable.

But we also see the beauty of it.

We see in this parable that the righteous man who comes to the temple to pray isn't the one who leaves justified. Rather, it is the other. It is the one that he is grateful to be nothing like.

We've been in both pairs of sandals in this parable. We've been in the sandals of the one who has nothing but thanks and praise to offer up to God, and we've been in the sandals of the one who comes to pray, unable to look up to heaven because of the shame of knowing what we have done. And both of those situations is okay.

Jesus doesn't preach against being thankful for what we have, or coming before God with confession on our lips. Jesus does preach against the idea of thinking that we determine who is, and is not, worthy of receiving God's amazing grace.

It is a challenge as people of faith to hear this. We want to think we are right, and often know for certain that we absolutely are right, and over the next two weeks and beyond that challenge is going to become even greater as we navigate the societal ebbs and flows of election season muck, but Jesus challenges us and calls us to something even greater. It doesn't mean that we are to sacrifice those things that we are passionate about. It doesn't mean that we are to stop fighting for those things we care deeply about should we find ourselves defeated. It does mean that we are continue to seek out ways to share the Good News of God's Love for God's People in even more boundless ways.

We are encouraged and challenged in hearing this word to NOT fall into the trap of the extremes presented in this parable. Rather, we are to listen to Jesus story and ask ourselves: How shall we pray to a wildly merciful God? And, how shall we live, having learned of such boundless mercy?

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

In gratitude and humility, let us join together in prayer on behalf of all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

God of mercy, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your name. Inspire your church to serve and love all people with the unceasing grace you extend to us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all creation, you formed a world where even the sparrow finds a home. Preserve the beauty and diversity of all creatures with whom we share the earth. Lead us to protect all living things. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of peace, you are an ever-present help in time of trouble. Rescue families and nations torn apart by violence and warfare (*especially*). Unite all people toward common goals of reconciliation and peace for every person. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of hope, you stand with the suffering and give strength. Comfort your people filled with fear or anger, anxiety or shame. Bring healing to all who are sick in body, mind, or spirit (*especially for Gena, Peyton, Matt, David, Cassie, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of restoration, you call us to trust in you and not ourselves alone. Make this congregation a community of humility and repentance, ready to encounter you in love and follow in your ways. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of eternal life, to you be the glory forever. We give you thanks for (*James of Jerusalem* and) all who have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and now live with you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

With grateful hearts we commend our spoken and silent prayers to you, O God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
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

“What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”

#774

Dismissal

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

October Financial Snapshot

Through October 19th

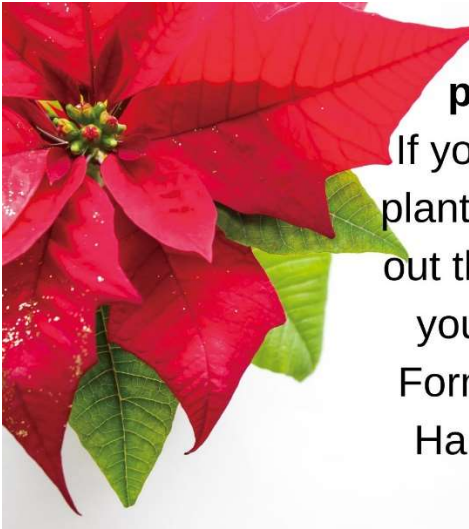
Total Revenue **\$17,124**

Total Expenses **\$18,641**

\$1,518 Gap

Still to come in
October

2 Sunday Offerings
\$4,000 projected expenses



It's time to get our poinsettias ordered!

If you would like to donate a plant for Christmas, please fill out the form and return it with your payment by Nov. 13. Forms are in the Fellowship Hall and outside the office door.

Please return the enclosed slip with your payment.



Election Day Bake Sale
It's your civic duty!

Bakers needed
for the Good Shepherd Outreach
Election Day Bake Sale!
Contact Heather Garber
Set-up help needed November 7th
(Not your polling place? We can accommodate)



If you would like to bake items, please have them to the church by 1 pm Nov. 7.