

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
July 30th, 2023

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

Greeting – The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who greets us in this and every season,
whose word never fails,
whose promise is sure.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God
and of our neighbors.

Merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have hurt our community.

We have squandered your blessings.

We have hoarded your bounty.

In the name of Jesus,

forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Righteous God,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have failed to be honest.

We have lacked the courage to speak.

We have spoken falsely.

In the name of Jesus,

forgive us and grant us your mercy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God is a cup of cold water when we thirst.

God offers boundless grace when we fail.

Claim the gift of God's mercy:

you are freed and forgiven

in the name of † Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Gathering Hymn "Gather Us In"

#532 vs. 1,3,4

Reading: Luke 22:39-46

He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. ⁴⁰ When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." ⁴¹ Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ⁴² "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, yet not my will but yours be done." ⁴³ Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. ⁴⁴ In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. ⁴⁵ When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

³¹[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he

goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵²And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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.

I spent the last week at Luther Park Bible Camp with a couple of kids from camp being up there as campers. On Tuesday evening the all camp game was a large group version of Rock – Paper – Scissors. Each team would decide what they were going to be, and if you were the losing team you had to run to your side of the field without getting tagged. If you got tagged you had to go to the other team. It is a game that no team is ever going to win and it just goes back and forth.

However, one of the times decided to say that instead of rock, paper, or scissors, they were going to be Jesus.

So, when they should Jesus, which for them was to appear to be on a cross, they then went and chased the other team. I was sitting with a couple of other pastors that were in camp and we all thought, “that isn’t how Jesus does it.”

You see, for us, and for many people that lived during Jesus’ time, the hope is that Jesus, this new king, would physically overthrow all that he came to undo. When in reality, he came as a sacrificial lamb. In the rock – paper – scissors game, to “be Jesus” should have meant that they stood in place and allowed themselves to get tagged. Thus, being the sacrificial lamb that ended that particular game.

But that isn’t what Jesus did.

Jesus didn’t come and answer his call to be the sacrificial lamb to change the world the way that we would have expected him to or even wanted him to. In fact he did the opposite.

Truth be told, I found myself realizing that I’d never really thought of Jesus having a call. We always think of what Jesus calls us to do, in fact we’ve talked it now for 9 weeks, but this week we find ourselves discerning what it is that Jesus is called to.

And, what has been beautiful about those 9 weeks is that the response to God’s call has varied. Again, we’ve had characters who have been approached by burning bushes, angels, voices in a dream, and more and their responses have been everything from sign up eagerly to run the other way. Some have even been thrown from boats and swallowed up by large fish.

These call narratives have been all over the board, but there have been constants as well.

God has constantly been at the center of these stories.

God is always calling, always affirming, always giving assurance.

Not only has Godself been placed at the center, but these characters have kept God at the center.

And so, we come to Jesus. We would expect that Jesus would hear God's call, and being God himself, we would think and expect that God the Son is going to be fully on board.

But, like any Father – Son relationship, there is a little bit of that, “you know Dad, I think there might be another way to do this.”

And this is one of my favorite moments of Jesus' life. It is a moment where we see his true humanness. Even if it is a fleeting moment. Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, ⁴² “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me,…”

For a fleeting begging moment Jesus asks God to change it up. God, find another way. Do something else. The people were right. You should have sent me to rule with an iron fist and physically overthrow the powers I've come to undo...

And then he remembers...”yet not my will but yours be done.”

Jesus remembers that which he is called to do and be in the world. For Him, with God's power behind him, the physical overthrow would have been easier that the route he ends up taking. God could have chosen that route. It would have been the easy route.

But.

Would it have changed anything? Would we be better off today if the God in Jesus story that we looked to and that our call as People of Faith revolved around were a story of violent overthrow? Some wish it were that way and think it was that way and in some areas we see that play out. But that isn't Jesus. And Jesus realizes that.

Jesus in this moment refers back to all the things that he has told the multitudes about how it is to be and says, “God, it is in your hands. Let's do the difficult work of reconciliation.”

“Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. ⁴⁴ In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.” In his moment of not asking, but demanding there must be another way, an Angel from heaven appears and gives him strength. He is in anguish with how this is going to play out, but knows that it is God's will.

People of God, we so often want to take the easier route. I'm not so sure there is an easy route to being church for the sake of the world in the 21st century. And that is okay. In fact, that is great!

This call to which we are called, to be a neighborhood church where each is known – seen – loved is a holy calling. It is difficult holy work but work in which we are not alone. God gives us strength for this mission through the work and witness of God's own Son, who also at times asks, “are you sure there isn't another way?” before seeing just how important his work is. And so to is ours.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Song of the Day **“Seek Ye First”**

Apostle's Creed

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of field and forest, sea and sky,
you are the giver of all good things.
Sustain us with these gifts of your creation,
and multiply your graciousness in us,
that the world may be fed with your love,
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
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

We thank you, generous God,
for the refreshment we have received
at your banquet table.
Send us now to spread your generosity into all the world,
through the one who is our dearest treasure,
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Blessing

The God who calls across the cosmos
and speaks in the smallest seed
✠ bless, keep, and sustain you
now and to the end of the age.
Amen.

Sending Song **“Be Thou My Vision”**

#793 vs. 1,2,4

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the harvest.
Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!
And all of Good Shepherd said...
AMEN!

July Financial Snapshot

Your generosity in action:

Heart for Luther Park quilt and silent auction is coming Sunday, August 6, benefitting the Ministry of Luther Park. Then, on August 10th is the LPBC Golf Outing. Sign up your team today or get your business out there as a hole sponsor!

THANK YOU!!

Through July 26

Total Revenue **\$25,140**

1 more Sunday Offerings to Come

Total Expenses **\$23,425**

Difference to date:
\$1,715



Lutheran Church of the
GOOD SHEPHERD
KNOWN · SEEN · LOVED

Our Values

Deep and meaningful relationships that cross generations
for the sake of the Gospel lived through:

A genuine welcome of all

Worship that engages each of God's children

Nurturing faith together

Meeting the needs of our neighbors



These 5 young people wanted to get in on the fun of supporting wonderful causes! On Sunday afternoon, on behalf of Good Shepherd, they presented Luther Park Bible Camp Executive Director Eric Klein with a \$2600 check from our Second Quarter Mission

Offering. This will go towards paying off the debt of the beautiful new Ministry Center.

