

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 10th, 2023

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

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 God,
the one who forms us,
✠ Jesus who bears the cross,
the Spirit who makes our joy complete.
Amen.

Let us bow before God in humility,
confessing our sin.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Steadfast and faithful God,
**you have revealed the ways of justice,
yet we fail to follow you.
We are overwhelmed
by the world's violence and suffering.
We are afraid to risk what we have
for the sake of others.**

**For the harm we have caused,
known and unknown, forgive us.
For the unjust demands we place on others
and your creation, forgive us.
For the ways we turn away
from you and our neighbor, forgive us.
Lead us back to you
and set us on the right path;
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.**

Beloved in Christ,
God's justice stretches beyond all understanding.
God's compassion is beyond compare.
In Jesus, God is always making a new way for us.
In ✠ Christ, you are already and always forgiven.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn “Christ, Be Our Light”

#715 vs. 1,2,3

Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Reading: Acts 16:6-10

They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. ⁷ When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; ⁸ so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. ⁹ During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew 18:15-20

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

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 final installment of our 16 weeks of Discerning God’s Call in Scripture worship series, seemingly contradicts the message of the last two weeks, but sheds light on what we, as a gathered people of faith, ought to be thinking as we discern where God is leading us as a community of faith.

The Introduction in our Devotion tells us, “Paul spent significant time traveling around the Roman Empire, preaching the Good News of Jesus and starting churches in many cities. How did he decide where to go? How did he know when to move on? This passage gives us a glimpse.”

The last two weeks, the call narratives of Peter and the Council at Jerusalem, encouraged us to think outside of the boundaries that we have set up for ourselves. We’ve been urged, and have heard stories of, God’s word reaching beyond where we expect it to be confined to. And, we’ve heard that those who believed to be the gatekeepers of the Good News of God’s Love for God’s People, were changed because of it. They discovered that the Word of God had indeed reached the people that they had deemed not worthy.

TODAY, we hear a slightly different tale.

Twice we hear some pretty strong language regarding where Paul is led to minister on his missionary journeys.

First, we hear that as he went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. As we looked at the map in the back of the Lutheran Study Bible that tracks Paul’s Missionary Journeys, you can almost see exactly where Paul experiences this. He had journeyed north, away from the path of his last journey, and finds himself between Galatia and Asia. Just north of Galatia is Bithynia, which is where the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. So he is a bit stuck if you will. In this no man’s land between where the Holy Spirit forbids them to go and the Spirit of Jesus would not allow.

So, they make this big loop heading back west to get back on the path they’d previously taken and they find themselves at Troas.

Now, we aren’t too used to the Holy Spirit doing this sort of thing. We have countless stories of the Spirit leading Jesus into places we wouldn’t expect, we’ve heard numerous call narratives where God encourages those that are called to go into the places that they maybe shouldn’t or wouldn’t want to.

But here it is different. The Holy Spirit forbids Paul go to Asia. And the Spirit of Jesus wouldn’t allow him to go to Bithynia.

And we wonder what this means for us as people of faith.

So often as we think of ourselves as church, we think that we need to do this and this and this and this and this and this and this and this and this. And we measure how well we've done based on how well we have tended to this and this and this and this and this and this and this and this and this.

We all now that when we spread ourselves that thin, we don't usually tend to tall of the "this" in life as best we could. We know there is not enough of ourself to adequately give attention to all that we think we need to do.

So, we go back to stories of Jesus and His ministry and wonder if there maybe isn't a little bit of what Jesus taught them at play here.

- 1) Jesus told his followers, when he sent them out two by two, to not waste their time in a place that doesn't welcome them and to shake the dust from their feet upon departure.

Maybe, just maybe, there is a little bit of that at play here. Paul and those travelling with him perhaps looked at what it would have meant for them to make this trek and thought, "I don't think that's what God wants us to do."

- 2) It would do us well to look at how Jesus, the greatest miracle worker known to man, came upon the many miracles that he performed.

Jesus rarely, if ever, went searching for a miracle to perform.

The feeding of the 5,000 happened because the crowd was so large, the hour was late, and the disciples sensed they were hungry. They came to Jesus and he told them to feed the masses.

The paralytic was literally lowered through a roof into the room where Jesus was. And Jesus made him well.

Countless other miracle stories tell us of people coming to him and saying "we need a miracle. Do something."

And, that is the experience that Paul has as well.

Upon arrival in Troas Paul has a vision. In that vision is a Man from Macedonia crying out, "Come here and help us." All Paul did was get back to the path that he was used to, and the next mission presented itself.

We spend so much time thinking about what we need to do next, often times weighing what might make us look the best, that we miss the world around us crying out for help.

It would do us well as people of faith to ask that very question. Who is our man from Macedonia?

Who, in our daily lives living in the world we freely pass through day in and day out is the one crying out to experience the Good News of God's Love for God's People?

And, who are we missing when we find ourselves worrying about doing the right thing that will make us look the best?

People of God, the greatest miracle worker known to man rarely sought the next miracle to perform. He simply ministered to the world that presented itself to Him.

Let us go and do the same.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Remembering the caring and generous works of God, we pray for the church, creation, and the needs of our neighbors.

A brief silence.

Hold us accountable, O God. Show your church where repentance is needed and lead us in paths of intentional compassion and listening. Help us extend hands of reconciliation and care, especially in relationships with other Christians and people of other faiths. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Reveal your miracles to us, O God. Move us to cherish you as we behold the wonders of creation. Renew the seas and the soil, the forests and the creatures that live in them. Turn us to ways of living that seek Earth’s thriving. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Inspire us to lead with honor, O God. Guide judges and legislators, police, and government officials to create and uphold just laws. Move us to treat all people with dignity and guide our conversations with one another. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Help us comfort those who suffer, O God. Reassure any who are harmed by the wicked acts of others. Bring peace to all who are vulnerable, frightened, despairing, or sick (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Irene, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary*). Guard their waking and their sleeping. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Awaken us, O God. Challenge and encourage your people to value the vocation to which each is called. We pray for all discerning new possibilities or changing employment (*especially*). In all our diverse callings, teach us to love our neighbor above all else. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Be our hope, O God. We remember with thanksgiving your disciples who died in faith (*especially*). May their trust in your promise be our protection and our hope. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of our heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

God of power, God of plenty,
all things belong to you.

We bring your gifts to the table,
that all might be fed.

Form us into the body of your Beloved,
Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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 #471 and #483

Prayer

Blessed be your name, O God,
for we have feasted on your Word,
Christ Jesus, the joy and delight of our hearts.
Strengthened by this food,
send us to gather the world to your banquet,
where none are left out and all are satisfied.
Amen.

Blessing

The God of glory,
✠ Jesus Christ, name above all names,
and the Spirit who lives in you,
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

Sending Song "Christ, Be Our Light"

#715 vs. 1,4,5

Dismissal

Go in peace. God is at work in you.
Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!
And all of Good Shepherd said...
AMEN!

September Financial Snapshot

Your Generosity in Action:

With the start of the school year our students and families are eager to get back to their routines. That means SHEPHERD'S KIDS Faith Formation. Your generosity supports the purchase of the curriculum as well as the evolving plans of the updated youth room!

THANK YOU!!

Through September 6

Total Revenue **\$4,553**

3 Sunday offerings remain

Total Expenses **\$6,856**

Last year: \$19,931

Difference to date:

-\$2,303



Lutheran Church of the
GOOD SHEPHERD
KNOWN · SEEN · LOVED

Strong Again Summer Appeal

Boiler Loan = \$2,047.27 ELIMINATED,
Youth Room Remodel = \$3,000 COVERED
Line of Credit = \$10,259.19 PAID OFF
Towards a Fall Cushion = \$9,031
and GROWING STRONGER

Generosity \$2,000 Lead Gift
Breakdown \$10,00 match met = \$20,000
\$24,334 total

Fall Program Kickoff 2023 September 10

Come for worship and blessing of vocations
Following worship we'll have
Inflatables, bubbles, yard games, and more
Ramone's Ice Cream
Lemonade and Cookie Stand supporting Roosevelt Elementary



SUMMER WORSHIP

LISTENING TO GOD

How do those living the story hear God's call?
How open are they to God's call?
What might this passage say to us?

Q&A September 17
What have you heard?
How have these stories
resonated with you?
Submit your questions now!

Lunch at Good Shepherd Senior Apartments

Would you like to join your friends at the apartments for lunch sometime? They are now offering the opportunity to purchase lunch (to eat there or take out) to people outside of the residence. The cost is \$10 to dine in or \$11 for takeout. You must order by the Wednesday before the week you want to purchase lunch. We have the [menu](#) and the [order form](#) available for you to check out for Sept. 18-23. If you have any questions, please call the church office (715-83-2959) or the GSSA office (715-834-3587).