

## Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost – September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

### Introduction to the Day

Jesus protests against human customs being given the weight of divine law, while the essence of God's law is ignored. True uncleanness comes not from external things, but from the intentions of the human heart. Last week Jesus told us "the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John 6:63). Now James says God has given us birth by the word of truth. We who were washed in the word when we were born in the font return to it every Sunday to ask God to create in us clean hearts.

**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.

### Welcome

#### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin and come to God for healing.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we have honored you with our lips,  
but have harmed our neighbors with our tongues.**

**The cravings at war within us  
cause conflicts and disputes.**

**In our desire to be first  
we make distinctions among ourselves.**

**We place the needs of the poor and the suffering  
last.**

**In your great mercy, forgive us our sins.**

**Draw near to us with grace in time of need,  
and turn us to follow in the way of Jesus Christ,  
our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God promises to forgive our iniquity  
and to remember our sin no more.

By grace you have been saved.

In the name of † Jesus Christ,  
the source of eternal healing,  
your sins are forgiven.

**Amen.**

### Gathering Hymn

**"For the Beauty of the Earth"**

**#879**

### Prayer of the Day

O God our strength, without you we are weak and wayward creatures. Protect us from all dangers that attack us from the outside, and cleanse us from all evil that arises from within ourselves, that we may be preserved through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

### Reading – Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

<sup>1</sup>So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. <sup>2</sup>You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you.

<sup>6</sup>You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" <sup>7</sup>For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup>And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup>But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

The Word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God.**

### **Children's Message**

#### **Gospel – Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

<sup>1</sup>Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around [Jesus], <sup>2</sup>they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup>(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; <sup>4</sup>and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) <sup>5</sup>So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” <sup>6</sup>He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me;  
<sup>7</sup>in vain do they worship me,  
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

<sup>8</sup>You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

<sup>14</sup>Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup>there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.

<sup>21</sup>“For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup>adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

The Gospel of Our 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

The story of Jesus being challenged on the cleanliness of his disciples eating habits happens in the middle of miracle upon miracle.

Immediately before this Jesus has just literally walked across the sea after having fed 5,000 people plus women and children with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, and everyone ate, and all were satisfied, and there were leftovers.

Immediately after this, Jesus is going to try to get away for some peace and quiet, where he will encounter a woman whose daughter has an unclean spirit and he will heal her, after which he will return from his getaway to encounter a deaf man whose hearing he restores, all before feeding another large crowd, this time 4,000 people with 7 loaves and a few small fish.

All of this to say that there is clearly something special about this Jesus fella. There is more at work in and through him than a man traveling the countryside teaching and preaching. He has a gift.

And, the ruling class knows it. They sense it. And, truthfully, they fear it.

Which is why we get the story we get today, again in the middle of miracle story after miracle story. The ruling class, those who hold all of the power (and sense it slipping through their fingers) wants to challenge Jesus on just about anything they can come up, because they see it is starting to become challenging to find anything worthwhile.

So, Jesus and his disciples find themselves grabbing a bite to eat, when the societal authority in the room points out that they have not washed their hands. “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

Jesus is prepared for their challenge. “Isaiah was right about you hypocrites.”

We hear this interaction, and our mind tends to go one of two ways.

- 1) How dare they not adhere to that which their elders have taught them, and;
- 2) Is that really what the Pharisees want to get so upset about?

Jesus hears this challenge, amid this interaction, and gets to the heart of the problem. Essentially Jesus is telling them here, “God doesn’t need your lip-service. Your neighbor needs your actual service.”

Those who wish to challenge him, as they start to feel their power slipping through their fingers with every next thing that they hold dear to being challenged, are more concerned with the ways that things have always been done, to the point that they miss the miracle of God’s activity through Jesus’ presence among them, and all that is happening because of it.

What Jesus does NOT do here is say that all traditions of our elders should be scrapped. And he also isn’t telling us that we don’t need to wash our hands before eating. But he is telling us that if we cling to those traditions more than we grasp for God’s redemptive activity here and now, then we are doing it wrong.

As church, we are guilty of this all the time. We see something new in our midst and our first response is to say, “that’s not the way we’ve always done it.” And I assure you, if you feel indicted by that statement, I am just as guilty.

And, my hope in that is this, that we are able to sit in that discomfort together. It is never Jesus’ intention to leave behind those whose ideas and ways of doing things he challenges. It is always Jesus’ hope to bring along those who might feel left behind. To learn from the ways in which things have always been done to inform new ways in which God’s presence is experienced among them.

The truth about that which Jesus calls us to do and be in the world is that it is dirty work, and if all we do is worry about our clean hands, that work will never get done. Let’s look to the things that we have always done and the ways in which we’ve done them, and as the cleansing question of how it is that those things can/will shape a future together.

That is what this is all about.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

**Hymn of the Day**

**“Baptized and Set Free”**

**#453**

**Apostle’s Creed**

**Prayers**

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God’s good creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of every generation, give the church a sense of purpose and belonging. Sustain and build up leaders and lay people as we accompany one another in our life with Christ. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

God of creation, you named humans as co-creators with you. Where the earth cries out in pain, bring wholeness. Guide governments and industry, that environmental laws and practices seek to heal and not harm. Bring relief and justice to people and places suffering from climate catastrophe (*especially*). Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Sovereign God, we pray for local communities of every kind: rural and urban; established and new. Lead those in authority to seek the good of all through their words and actions and to mentor others in honest and generous ways. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

Healing God, you draw near to all who are hurting. Be with all who desire relief from chronic and acute illness, cancer, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Strengthen health care workers, therapists, and caregivers. Tend to those who are close to our hearts (*We pray especially for Matt, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Cherri, Peggy, John, Judy, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Dan and Sharon, Roger and MaryLee*). Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

On this Labor Day weekend we remember and give thanks for all who have fought for workers' rights around the world. Continue to improve working conditions and establish fair wages so that all people may thrive.

Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Comforting God, console us as we mourn our departed (*especially*). We hold fast to the promise that death has been defeated by our Savior Jesus Christ. Merciful God,

**receive our prayer.**

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

**Peace**

**Offering**

**Offertory Prayer**

Blessed are you, O God,  
source of every gift of your creation.

By these gifts and with our lives,  
help us to serve one another and all in need,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**Sacrament of Holy Communion**

**Lord's Prayer**

Jesus welcomes you to this table.

Come, here is your God.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Holy God,  
you have welcomed us to this meal  
and fed us with dignity at your table.  
Send us now to welcome others  
and to be at peace with one another,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Blessing**

God all mighty,  
God most merciful  
✠ bless you, keep you,  
and give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending Hymn**

**“Seek Ye First”**

**#WOV 783**

**Sending**

Go in peace. Follow Jesus!

**Okay! We will! Thanks be to God.**

And all of Good Shepherd said,

**“AMEN”**

# Your Generosity in Action:



For the month of August our Mission Offering will be going to Fire Relief Efforts at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Longwood.

This congregation lost their sanctuary and suffered some damage to their Parish Hall in a July 23rd Fire.

Clean-up is underway and conversations about how/what to rebuild are taking place. Any bit that we can offer in support will go towards their future as God's people called to that place.

## THANK YOU!!

Monthly Financials to date:	Total Revenue	Total Expenses	Difference
	<b>\$20,803</b>	<b>\$21,322</b>	<b>-\$519</b>
	2023: \$20,879	2023: \$18,137	



## Thank You

Thank you to all for your kind words and gifts as I retire. You are all a blessing to me. I will enjoy taking my grandsons to the Children's Museum, as well as find lots of things to do with my quilts with the gifts you gave me. I have made many friends here and I look forward to seeing you all in and around the community. God's Blessings!





CAPITAL CAMPAIGN  
MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE  
towards the Consultant Fee  
In total we have received  
\$21,000 towards covering the  
\$35,500 Consultant Fee

A graphic of four musical notes (two eighth notes and two quarter notes) and a treble clef, all in various colors (yellow, pink, blue, green).

**CHOIRS WILL START  
SEPT. 4  
BELLS- 6:15  
CHOIR 7:30**

**ALL ARE WELCOME  
TO JOIN.**

Welcome Back Sunday and  
Fall Program Kickoff 2024

Sunday, September 8

Come for worship and stick around  
for fellowship and activities for all ages!

More details soon!

A row of ten hands, each with a letter on the palm, spelling out "WELCOME BACK". The hands are of various colors and are wearing colorful wristbands.

GOOD SHEPHERD  
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE  
GOOD SHEPHERD  
1000 CEDAR ST. TORONTO, ONT. M4M 1Y7