

Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost – October 6th, 2024

Introduction to the Day

Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

**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 vss 1, 2, 4, 5**

**Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, we thank you for the community that is Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. We are grateful for the lives impacted, relationships built, and the mission we share in the neighborhood and larger community.

We turn our hearts and minds to the future, knowing that your work is not done here. Enlighten and enliven us to come together in confidence, courage, and hope. Fill us with your life-giving love. Give us generous hearts to commit fully to the work of the **“Building Together for Generations to Come”** Capital Campaign.

Stir in us a desire to contribute to a creative and faithful legacy. As we go forward, bless this campaign to be a blessing to others. May all that we do lead others into a relationship with you and bring honor and glory to your name. AMEN

**Capital Campaign Verse - Colossians 2:6-7**

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

## Reading - Psalm 8

1 O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
2 **you whose glory is chanted above the heavens out of the mouths of infants and children;  
you have set up a fortress against your enemies, to silence the foe and avenger.**  
3 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars you have set in their courses,  
4 **what are mere mortals that you should be mindful of them,  
human beings that you should care for them?**  
5 Yet you have made them little less than divine; with glory and honor you crown them.  
6 **You have made them rule over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet:**  
7 all flocks and cattle, even the wild beasts of the field,  
8 **the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatever passes along the paths of the sea.**  
9 O LORD our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

The word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel – Mark 10:2-16

2Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” 4They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.” 5But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. 6But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ 7‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

10Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

13People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

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

Though they have now left the place they'd been in for the Gospel lessons of weeks past, Jesus continues the trend of pushing the envelope regarding the expectation of how it is that things are in the world. They've left the home where they'd been, in which Jesus taught them to disconnect from the earthly things

holding them back to fully experience the divine, to look out for the last and least among them, to realize that this work is not reserved solely for them simply because they are one of the twelve, and they now find themselves having journeyed from Capernaum to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, returning to the wilderness where Mark's gospel begins.

And crowds again gathered around him. He cannot escape them. They want to hear from him and learn from him, so, as was his custom, he again taught them.

It is during this teaching that some pharisees came and wanted to test him. They had it set in their mind what the answer to their question ought be, and to say otherwise surely puts them in the wrong. But, in answering this questioning that for many people brings with it some very real emotion. Chances are that just about anyone who hears this text today can go to some personal experience, and rarely are they easy emotions to conjure up. But, in answering their question, Jesus does what he has been doing for the last few weeks.

He challenges them to think beyond what they know to be, and are certain of, truth.

But, he doesn't do this until they enter the house, seemingly telling us the crowd is smaller. Up until this point he has essentially told his challengers, "you know the answers you want to hear, and quite frankly the chances of me changing your mind aren't great." For those who wished to test Jesus, it is a man's world. Men have power. They have privilege. And the dissolving of a marriage is theirs and only theirs to decide. An awful situation for a woman to be in.

But, upon entering the house, again with the crowd seemingly smaller, and we later get some clues as to who *else* was in the house, the disciples asked him to clarify. He at first echoes what he had said to those who tested him. "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; AND if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Yes, the lesson here would seem that Jesus is against divorce. That seems an undeniable truth. But it is bigger than that. It has long been preached that it is God's desire in Jesus Christ that we are in relationship in one another, and in that relationship with one another we are in relationship with Christ himself. Jesus here, while seemingly teaching against divorce, is also teaching against this being a man's world. He gives place to women in the story. It was subtle. But it is there. To this point it would have been unheard of that someone would mention, "and if she divorces her husband..." but here we are. Jesus continually pushes the boundary to imagine a world where the vulnerable, the less than, the least, are seen as equals.

Whether that is the person we in favor of making ourselves look better, or the person we ought to be serving but instead step in front of, or the person that we continually put stumbling blocks in front of to ensure that we get it all, or the person that we continually think of as subject, Jesus continually think of those among us who are considered less than, and how it is that we might be in relationship with them.

Because, it is God's desire that we are in healthy relationships with one another, and in doing so find ourselves in healthy relationship with God in Jesus Christ.

Jesus knew his crowd in this teaching moment. It wasn't just the twelve. There were some mom's with their children not far off screen. And in this moment of being given a place, being seen as an equal, they bring their children to him, and we are again reminded...

"Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God as one of these most vulnerable, will never receive it."

We so often want to look at situations, whatever they may be, as black and white. When the truth is that is rarely, if ever the case. The reality is we often have no clue what another's story might be. What their situation is. What their "why" may be.

But Jesus, time and time again, tells us to find that embrace. To find it within ourselves to be that presence of God's grace in whatever those moments and those stories may be.

And, he continually urges us, reminds us, let the most vulnerable come to me. God knows this world, our lives, each situation, is not perfect. And there is grace for that.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

**Hymn of the Day**                      **"Bind us Together"**                      **WOV #748**

**Apostle's Creed**

**Prayers**

Challenged by God's Word in Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

God of our ancestors, we give thanks for the church in all times. May we listen for the prophets of this age who bear messages that stir the church toward renewal and justice. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Creator of every creature on earth, direct our lives toward the renewal and sustaining of cattle, birds of the air, animals of the field, and those who share our homes. Reveal the ways we can work alongside creation for the health and well-being of all. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Sovereign God, we give thanks that you are mindful and benevolent to even us, mere mortals. Accompany us when hardness of heart gets in the way of justice between people and nations. Endow leaders with minds for justice and hearts for compassion. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Restoring Lord, grant healing and wholeness to those who are sick and suffering. We pray especially for Becky, Dawn, Grady and Jace, 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. Work through medical professionals to diagnose, ease pain, and give life to all who seek their wisdom and experience. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Unifying God, humans were created for relationship with the earth, its creatures, and one another. Forgive us when division threatens companionship, mutual support, and unity among us. May your love inspire us to build supportive communities of faith where all are cherished. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

God of resurrection, you prepare a place in the kingdom through Christ's death and resurrection. We give thanks for the saints who have taken their place at your heavenly banquet (*especially William Tyndale, translator and martyr, whom we commemorate today*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the saving grace you freely give, both now and forever.

**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**

**"Now Thank We All Our God" #839 vss 1, 3**

#### **Sending**

Go in peace. Follow Jesus!

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

And all of Good Shepherd said,

**"AMEN"**

# 2024 Financial Snapshot

Month of September

Year-to-Date

Total Revenue **\$21,358** **\$225,614**

Total Expenses **\$19,025** **\$217,534**

Difference **2,333** **\$8,080**

Available in the Checkbook: \$18,007



**BUILDING  
TOGETHER**  
for Generations to Come

**October 18 Congregation Event  
at the Children's Theater - 5:30 pm**

**RSVP following worship  
or using the various methods  
available in the invite you've  
received.**

**Didn't get an invite?**

**PLEASE let us know!**

**RSVP BY Tuesday, October 8**