

The Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost ✠ September 27, 2020

WELCOME! Today's Gospel reading tells of Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say; it reveals surprises about the reign of God. In the Old Testament reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us, in the Epistle Reading, to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by God's Word, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.



THE PASTORAL GREETING

THE OPENING HYMN – “Built on the Rock”

(Vss. 1, 3, 5)

LSB 645

- 1 Built on the Rock the Church shall stand Even when steeples are falling.
Crumbled have spires in ev'ry land; Bells still are chiming and calling,
Calling the young and old to rest,
But above all the souls distressed, Longing for rest everlasting.

- 3 We are God's house of living stones, Built for His own habitation.
He through baptismal grace us owns Heirs of His wondrous salvation.
Were we but two His name to tell,
Yet He would deign with us to dwell With all His grace and His favor.

- 5 Grant, then, O God, Your will be done, That, when the church bells are ringing,
Many in saving faith may come Where Christ His message is bringing:
“I know My own; My own know Me.
You, not the world, My face shall see. My peace I leave with you. Amen.”

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THE INVOCATION AND CONFESSION

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: O Lord, open my lips.

C: **And my mouth will declare Your praise** *Ps. 51:15*

P: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C: **Make haste to help me, O Lord. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.** *Ps. 70:1*

P: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word and to call upon him in prayer and praise, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as his people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking his grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

C: **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

P: Almighty God in his mercy has given his Son to die for you and for his sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Blessed be God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit!
C: **O come, let us worship Him!**

THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

P: The Lord be with you.
C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. God of love, Giver of Life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
C: **Amen.**

THE HYMN OF PRAISE – “Lord, Whose Love...” (Vss. 1,3,4) **LSB 848**

- 1 Lord, whose love through humble service Bore the weight of human need,
Who upon the cross, forsaken, Offered mercy’s perfect deed,
We, Your servants, bring the worship Not of voice alone, but heart,
Consecrating to Your purpose Ev’ry gift that You impart.

- 3 As we worship, grant us vision, Till Your love’s revealing light
In its height and depth and greatness, Dawns upon our quickened sight,
Making known the needs and burdens Your compassion bids us bear,
Stirring us to tireless striving, Your abundant life to share.

- 4 Called by worship to Your service, Forth in Your dear name we go,
To the child, the youth, the aged, Love in living deeds to show;
Hope and health, goodwill and comfort, Counsel, aid, and peace we give,
That Your servants, Lord, in freedom May Your mercy know and live.

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✠ THE WORD ✠

THE FIRST READING – Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32, ESV

In this reading, the prophet Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

The word of the Lord came to me: “What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. [...]

“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life. Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why

will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

THE SECOND READING – Philippians 2:1-13, ESV

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

[Paul wrote:] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

THE HYMN – “Dearest Jesus, at Your Word”

Tune: LSB 520

- 1 Dearest Jesus, at your word We have come again to hear you;
Let our thoughts and hearts be stirred And in glowing faith be near you
As the promises here given Draw us wholly up to heaven.

- 2 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Praise to you and adoration!
Grant us what we need the most: All your Gospel's consolation
While we here on earth await you, Till in heav'n with praise we greet you.

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THE HOLY GOSPEL READING – Matthew 21:23-32, ESV

And when [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying,

“If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

THE HYMN – “Praise and Thanksgiving”

LSB 789

- 1 Praise and thanksgiving, Father, we offer
For all things living, Created good:
Harvest of sown fields, Fruits of the orchard,
Hay from the mown fields, Blossom and wood.
- 2 Bless, Lord, the labor We bring to serve You
That with our neighbor We may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, We would work with You,
Harvesting, milling For daily bread.
- 3 Father, providing Food for Your children,
By Your wise guiding Teach us to share
One with another, So that, rejoicing
With us, all others May know Your care.

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THE MESSAGE

✠ THE RESPONSE ✠

THE HYMN – “We Praise You, O God”

LSB 785

- 1 We praise You, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before You, we kneel and adore You;
We bless Your holy name, glad praises we sing.
- 2 We worship You, God of our fathers, we bless You;
Through trial and tempest our guide You have been.
When perils o’ertake us, You will not forsake us,
And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.
- 3 With voices united our praises we offer
And gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
With You, Lord, beside us, Your strong arm will guide us.
To You, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

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THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his 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 into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Each petition will end with the words: Lord, in Your mercy, **C: hear our prayer.**

Hear us Heavenly Father, as we pray the prayer that Christ gave us:

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.

THE BLESSING

P: May almighty God: Father, Son ✠ and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

C: Amen.

THE HYMN – “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus”

(V.s. 5)

LSB 821

- 5 Alleluia! Sing to Jesus; His the scepter, His the throne;
Alleluia! His the triumph, His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood:
“Jesus out of ev’ry nation Has redeemed us by His blood.”

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✠ May God bless you and yours. ✠

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