

15th Sunday After Pentecost
Adaptive Worship Service
September 13, 2020



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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! In today's first reading Joseph shows amazing forgiveness towards his brothers. His story reminds us that we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world .

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: GraceCLW.com

ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

GREETING

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

Congregation: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Genesis 50:15-21

Introduction to the Lesson: *After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.*

Reader: 15 After the death of their father, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still hates us and plans to pay us back for all the harm we did to him?" 16 So they sent a message to Joseph: "Before our father died, 17 he told us to ask you, 'Please forgive the crime your brothers committed when they wronged you.' Now please forgive us the wrong that we, the servants of your father's God, have done." Joseph cried when he received this message.

18 Then his brothers themselves came and bowed down before him. "Here we are before you as your slaves," they said.

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid; I can't put myself in the place of God. 20 You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to preserve the lives of many people who are alive today because of what happened. 21 You have

nothing to fear. I will take care of you and your children.” So he reassured them with kind words that touched their hearts.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 18:21-35

Introduction to the Gospel: *When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 18th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, if my brother keeps on sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven times?”

22 “No, not seven times,” answered Jesus, “but seventy times seven,[d] 23 because the Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who decided to check on his servants' accounts. 24 He had just begun to do so when one of them was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. 25 The servant did not have enough to pay his debt, so the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, with his wife and his children and all that he had, in order to pay the debt. 26 The servant fell on his knees before the king. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay you everything!’ 27 The king felt sorry for him, so he forgave him the debt and let him go.

28 “Then the man went out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him a few dollars. He grabbed him and started choking him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he said. 29 His fellow servant fell down and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back!’ 30 But he refused; instead, he had him thrown into jail until he should pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were very upset and went to the king and told him everything. 32 So he called the servant in. ‘You worthless slave!’ he said. ‘I forgave you the whole amount you owed me, just because you asked me to. 33 You should have had mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you.’ 34 The king was very angry, and he sent the servant to jail to be punished until he should pay back the whole amount.”

35 And Jesus concluded, “That is how my Father in heaven will treat every one of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Deep Waters of Forgiveness

Churches have different practices around baptism. In some churches, a small bowl holds just enough water to trickle a few drops over the head. In others, the bowl is wider and the water is splashed with the whole hand. In yet other churches, the person is fully immersed in a font large enough for them to go all the way underwater. Sometimes the water stays in the bowl, sometimes a bit splashes out, and sometimes the whole area around the font gets wet. But no matter the amount of water used, there's always more where it comes from. God's waters of forgiveness run deeper than we will ever know.

The waters of baptism are so deep that even a few sprinkles cover a lifetime of falling short. We are forgiven time and again for a myriad of sins. And because the weight of sin has been lifted from us, we are free to extend such forgiveness to others.

In fact, our faith depends on it. In the Lord's Prayer, our petition for forgiveness is directly tied to our own willingness to forgive others: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." Thankfully, we are not expected to conjure up such forgiveness on our own. We draw from the endless supply of divine reserves. Where we, and Peter, might have difficulty forgiving a mere seven times, Jesus reminds us that his kind of forgiveness can be measured on an exponential scale.

While our capacity for forgiveness may be limited, Jesus' well of forgiveness is deep enough for all people and all matters of sin. When we find ourselves struggling to extend forgiveness to others, we return to the baptismal font. This is an overflowing well of love. Drawing from this water, we draw from the limitless supply of forgiveness.

Remembering our baptism, we are reminded not only that we are forgiven, but that we, too, are agents of forgiveness in the world.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

vs. 1 & 3



- 1 Joy - ful, joy - ful we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love!
- 2 All thy works with joy sur - round thee, earth and heav'n re - flect thy rays,
- 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,



Hearts un - fold like flow'rs be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.
stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.
well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!



Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness, drive the gloom of doubt a-way.
Field and for-est, vale and moun-tain, flow-'ry mead-ow, flash-ing sea,
Thou our Fa-ther, Christ our broth-er, all who live in love are thine;



Giv-er of im-mor-tal glad-ness, fill us with the light of day.
chant-ing bird, and flow-ing foun-tain call us to re-joice in thee.
teach us how to love each oth-er, lift us to the joy di-vine!

Text: Henry van Dyke, 1852–1922

Music: HYMN TO JOY. Ludwig van Beethoven, 1770–1827, adapt.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: You welcome us when we are weak in faith. Uphold your church throughout the world; make it a place of welcome. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries. Nurture new ministries of education and growth. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Make your ways known to the nations. Speak kindness to our bitter grudges. Settle our hearts when we want to settle accounts with violence. Bless our leaders with patience and wisdom. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Bring healing and justice wherever harm is dealt. Provide vindication for all who are oppressed. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor; deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger, and guard refugees fleeing famine, poverty, and war. We pray for healing (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon

Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne & Larry Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including COVID-19, Hurricane Laura, and California wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 190,000+ people in the US & the 893,000+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

Congregation: 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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

Congregation: Amen.

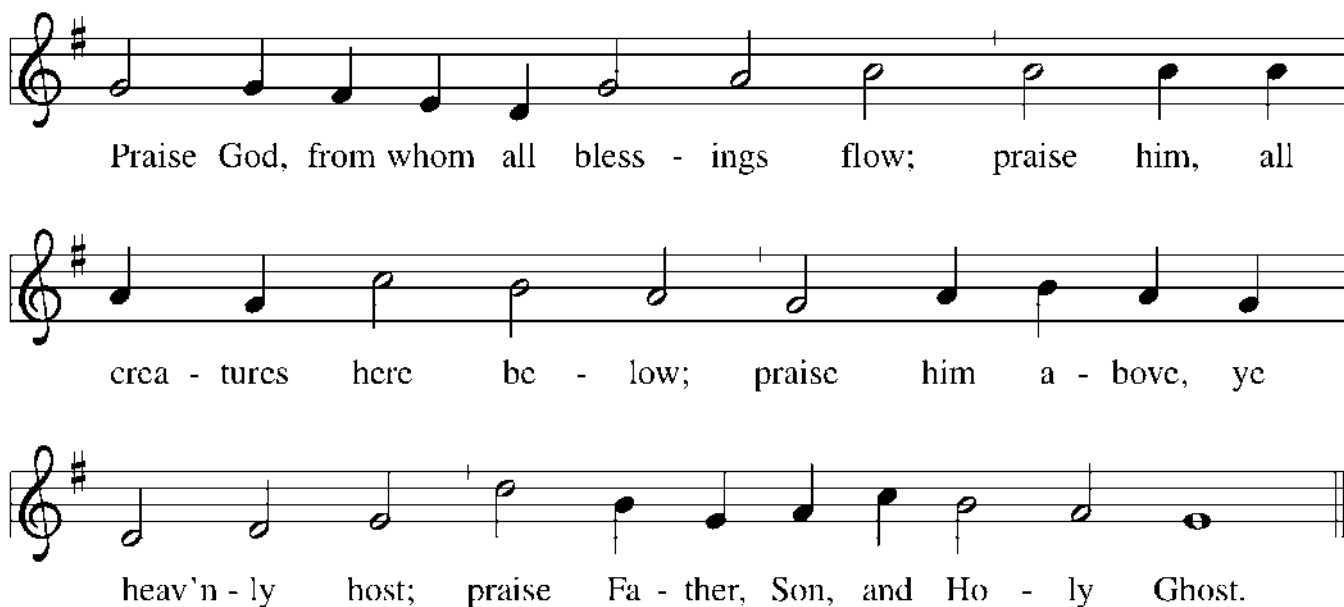
BLESSING

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Doxology



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Congregation: Thanks be to God!

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