

17th Sunday After Pentecost
Adaptive Worship Service
September 27, 2020



1812 North Highland Avenue
Clearwater, Florida 33755
Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy 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: 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.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Philippians 2:1-13

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: Your life in Christ makes you strong, and his love comforts you. You have fellowship with the Spirit, and you have kindness and compassion for one another. 2 I urge you, then, to make me completely happy by having the same thoughts, sharing the same love, and being one in soul and mind. 3 Don't do anything from selfish ambition or from a cheap desire to boast, but be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. 4 And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own. 5 The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had:

6 He always had the nature of God,

but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God.

7 Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had,

and took the nature of a servant.

He became like a human being

and appeared in human likeness.

8 He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death—
his death on the cross.

9 For this reason God raised him to the highest place above
and gave him the name that is greater than any other name.

10 And so, in honor of the name of Jesus
all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below
will fall on their knees,

11 and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then, dear friends, as you always obeyed me when I was with you, it is even more
important that you obey me now while I am away from you. Keep on working with fear
and trembling to complete your salvation, 13 because God is always at work in you to
make you willing and able to obey his own purpose.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 21:23-32

Introduction to the Gospel: *After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12),
Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who
are supposed to be in charge of the temple.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew in the 21st chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 23 Jesus came back to the Temple; and as he taught, the chief priests
and the elders came to him and asked, “What right do you have to do these things? Who
gave you such right?”

24 Jesus answered them, “I will ask you just one question, and if you give me an answer,
I will tell you what right I have to do these things. 25 Where did John's right to baptize
come from: was it from God or from human beings?”

They started to argue among themselves, “What shall we say? If we answer, ‘From
God,’ he will say to us, ‘Why, then, did you not believe John?’ 26 But if we say, ‘From
human beings,’ we are afraid of what the people might do, because they are all
convinced that John was a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We don't know.”

And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you, then, by what right I do these things.

28 “Now, what do you think? There was once a man who had two sons. He went to the older one and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 ‘I don’t want to,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. ‘Yes, sir,’ he answered, but he did not go. 31 Which one of the two did what his father wanted?”

“The older one,” they answered.

So Jesus said to them, “I tell you: the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the Kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John the Baptist came to you showing you the right path to take, and you would not believe him; but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. Even when you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

I Believe in You

Today’s gospel questions what it means to believe in something. Belief can be exhibited by actions or in words, but true belief is displayed when the two contradict each other. We may say we do not believe in monsters under our bed. However, if upon hearing a noise underneath us at night, we clutch the blanket a little tighter around us, do we still claim to not believe in monsters? Believing in something or someone does more than affect our mind. It influences our behavior. It informs our actions and changes our character.

Believing in Jesus is not a cognitive experience alone. If it were, we’d be like the second son who professes to do the will of the father, but doesn’t. Rather, our actions are the mirrors of our belief, reflecting our faith outward. This is why worship is structured to rehearse our patterns of behavior for the world. In worship, we gather to practice accountability, interdependence, passing the peace, and turning toward God. Our faith shapes us to live in the world according to God’s principles of justice, mercy, and kindness.

When we believe in something, we give authority to it, whether the belief is spoken or enacted. This is why the words “I believe in you” before a feat of courage are often so powerfully effective. Knowing that someone believes in you bestows authority and strength. It moves you from thought to action, making it possible to boldly live into whatever is believed of you.

God believes in you. This does not mean there is a divine being out there who merely believes that you exist. This is not a passive form of believing. God believes in you and gives you authority to live boldly as a disciple of Jesus. Just as Jesus’ authority came

from God, so does your authority to do what you have been sent to do. "You can do it," God encourages. "I believe in you!"

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

I Love to Tell the Story

vs. 1 & 2



1 I love to tell the sto - ry of un - seen things a - bove,
2 I love to tell the sto - ry: how pleas - ant to re - peat
3 I love to tell the sto - ry, for those who know it best



of Je - sus and his glo - ry, of Je - sus and his love.
what seems, each time I tell it, more won - der - ful - ly sweet!
seem hun - ger - ing and thirst - ing to hear it like the rest.



I love to tell the sto - ry, be - cause I know it's true;
I love to tell the sto - ry, for some have nev - er heard
And when, in scenes of glo - ry, I sing the new, new song,



it sat - is - fies my long - ings as noth - ing else would do.
the mes - sage of sal - va - tion from God's own ho - ly word.
I'll sing the old, old sto - ry that I have loved so long.

Refrain



I love to tell the sto - ry; 'twill be my theme in glo - ry



to tell the old, old sto - ry of Je - sus and his love.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Prayer Leader: In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit (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 Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, the family and friends of Vicki Eis' Aunt Dorothy, 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, including the family and friends of Larry Sekel). Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely. 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

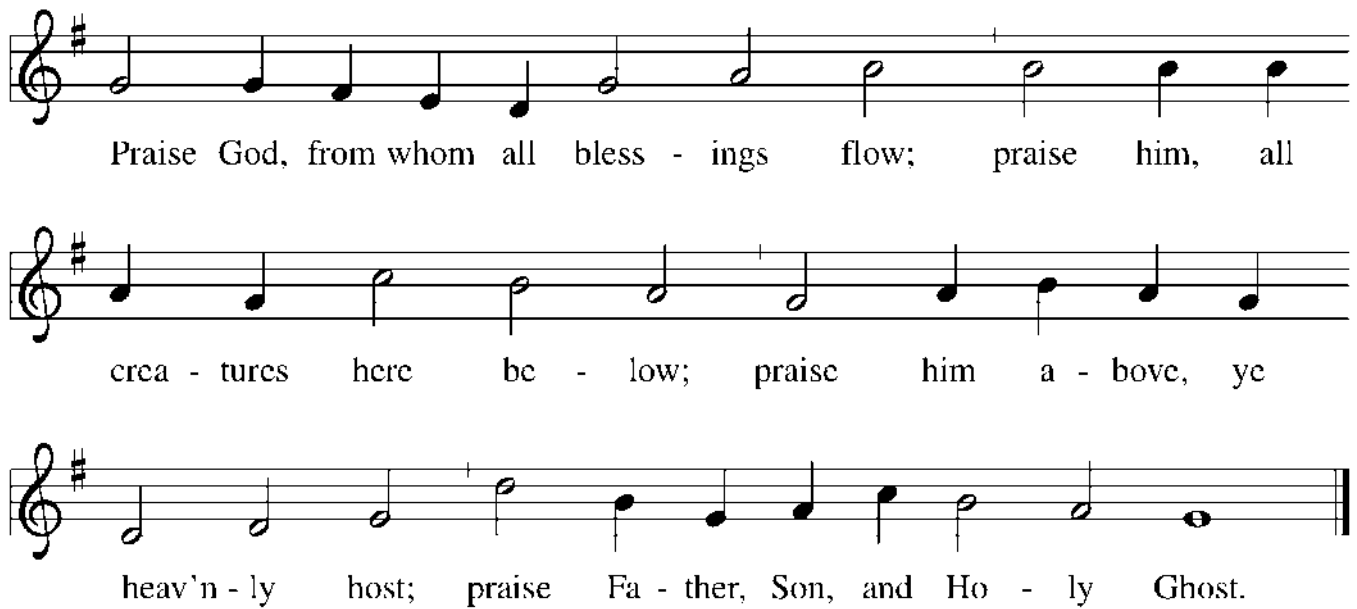
Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to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



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

SENDING SONG

Doxology

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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