

18th Sunday After Pentecost
Adaptive Worship Service

October 4, 2020



1812 North Highland Avenue
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Ministers: The People of Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! In today's gospel reading, Jesus tells a vineyard parable, which serves as an image of Israel, the prophets' mission, and Christ's death. For Christians, the vineyard also speaks of God's love poured out in the blood of Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. Grafted onto Christ the vine at baptism, we are nourished with wine and bread so that we may share Christ's sufferings and know the power of his resurrection.

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: Beloved God, from you come all things that are good. Lead us by the inspiration of your Spirit to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 5:1-7

Introduction to the Lesson: *The prophet sings a sad, parable-like love song about the relationship between God and Israel. In this song Israel is compared to a promising vineyard. Despite God's loving care, the vineyard that is Israel has brought forth "wild grapes" of injustice and distress, when fine grapes of justice and righteousness were expected.*

Reader: Listen while I sing you this song,
a song of my friend and his vineyard:

My friend had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

2 He dug the soil and cleared it of stones;
he planted the finest vines.

He built a tower to guard them,
dug a pit for treading the grapes.

He waited for the grapes to ripen,

but every grape was sour.

3 So now my friend says, “You people who live in Jerusalem and Judah, judge between my vineyard and me. 4 Is there anything I failed to do for it? Then why did it produce sour grapes and not the good grapes I expected?”

5 “Here is what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge around it, break down the wall that protects it, and let wild animals eat it and trample it down. 6 I will let it be overgrown with weeds. I will not trim the vines or hoe the ground; instead, I will let briars and thorns cover it. I will even forbid the clouds to let rain fall on it.”

7 Israel is the vineyard of the Lord Almighty;
the people of Judah are the vines he planted.

He expected them to do what was good,

but instead they committed murder.

He expected them to do what was right,

but their victims cried out for justice.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 21:33-46

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus tells a parable to the religious leaders who are plotting his death, revealing that their plans will, ironically, bring about the fulfillment of scripture.*

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

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: 33 “Listen to another parable,” Jesus said. “There was once a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the wine press, and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to tenants and left home on a trip. 34 When the time came to gather the grapes, he sent his slaves to the tenants to receive his share of the harvest. 35 The tenants grabbed his slaves, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again the man sent other slaves, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. 37 Last of all he sent his son to them. ‘Surely they will respect my son,’ he said. 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the owner's son. Come on, let's kill him, and we will get his property!’ 39 So they grabbed him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

40 “Now, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” Jesus asked.

41 “He will certainly kill those evil men,” they answered, “and rent the vineyard out to other tenants, who will give him his share of the harvest at the right time.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Haven't you ever read what the Scriptures say?

‘The stone which the builders rejected as worthless
turned out to be the most important of all.

This was done by the Lord;

what a wonderful sight it is!’

43 “And so I tell you,” added Jesus, “the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce the proper fruits.” 44 [b]

45 The chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables and knew that he was talking about them, 46 so they tried to arrest him. But they were afraid of the crowds, who considered Jesus to be a prophet.

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Call to Confession

Throughout his ministry in Matthew's gospel, Jesus draws in people at the margins of society. As the leader of a reform movement, Jesus spoke as a Jew to fellow Jews. When we read these stories centuries later, we must remember that his intent was to condemn exclusion and abuses of power—not to reject Judaism. His critiques still ring true for the power structures of the religious institutions of our time.

Jesus' parables stirred people up, provoking questions, doubts, even hostility. When his listeners recognized themselves in the parables, it was rarely comforting or affirming. Do we have the honesty and vulnerability to see ourselves critically in the stories as the chief priests and Pharisees did?

There aren't any clear heroes in this story, as in any story of class warfare. Perhaps the tenants turned to violence out of frustration with the economic injustice of their situation. The Pharisees were quick to side with the powerful landowner, asserting his right to kill the tenants and crush their revolt, yet Jesus does not affirm this escalation either.

We begin worship with a prayer of confession, recalling the image of God's goodness in each of us and yet honestly admitting our shame and guilt. Today's parable also issues a call to confession, alluding to the vineyard of Isaiah 5, which yielded wild grapes instead of sweet. God has created a world that can provide abundant life for all. What are the fruits of our congregations? God's heart longs for justice for all people. How might we unintentionally and unknowingly cultivate the sour wine of exclusion, discrimination, and injustice?

In the prayer of the day, we ask: “Beloved God, . . . lead us . . . to know those things that are right, and by your merciful guidance, help us to do them.” Empowered by God’s grace and forgiveness, we set to work removing the blinders that keep us from recognizing ourselves in parables’ antagonists and repenting of the injustices that we perpetuate.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

This Little Light of Mine

vs. 1 & 2



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
 let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Text: African American spiritual
 Music: THIS JOY, African American spiritual

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

Prayer Leader: Holy God, you call us to work for peace and justice in your vineyard. Refresh the church with your life, that we may bear fruit through work and service. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: Thank you for the abundant harvest of the earth. Bless and care for those whose hands bring the fruits of the earth to the tables of all who hunger. May we be inspired by your servants who cared deeply for your creation, especially Francis of Assisi, whom we commemorate today. 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 the President and his family and all those impacted by COVID-19, Hurricanes Laura and Sally, and Western wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 205,000+ people in the US & the 1 million+ 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.

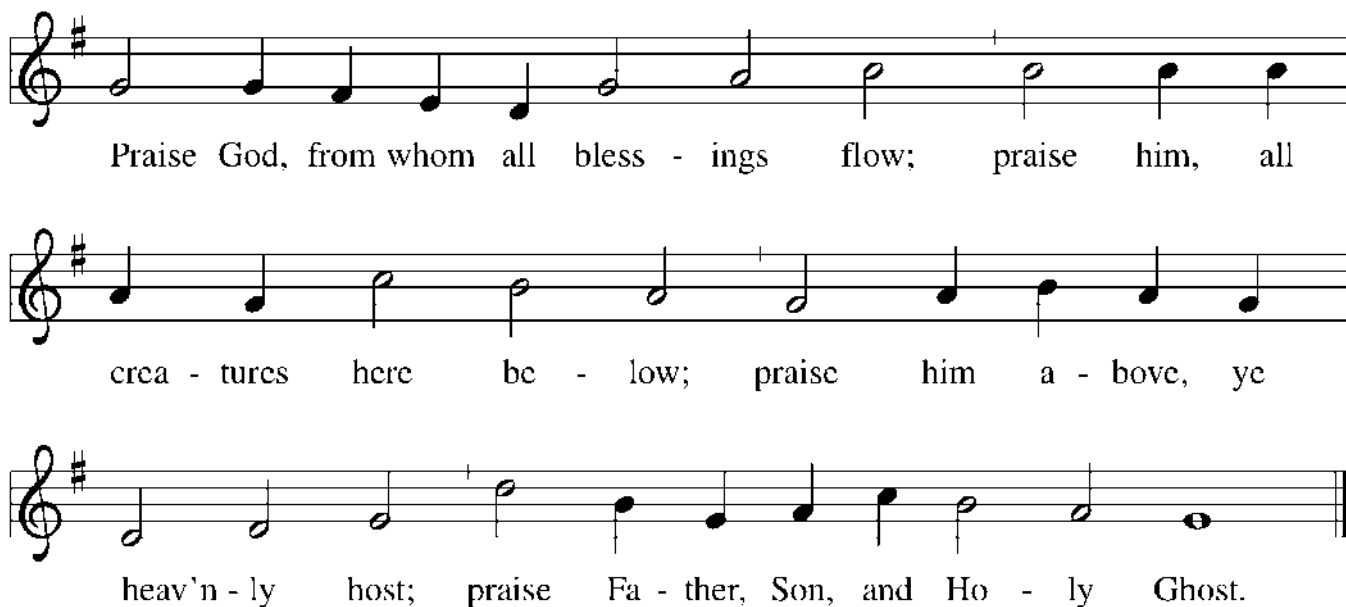
BLESSING

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.

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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