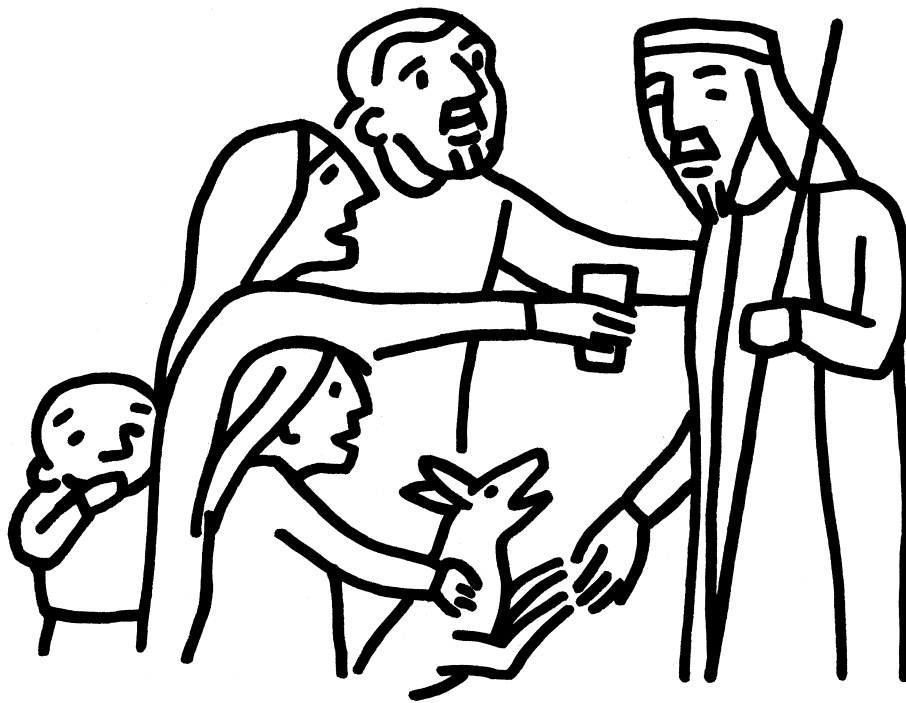


18th Sunday of Pentecost

September 26, 2021



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

727-446-5026
office@GraceCLW.com
Pastor: Rev. Jefferson Cox

Welcome! Someone who isn't part of Jesus' own circle is casting out demons in Jesus' name, and the disciples want him stopped. They appeal to Jesus, as Joshua did to Moses about the elders who prophesied without official authorization. Like Moses, Jesus refuses to see this as a threat. Jesus welcomes good being done in his name, even when it is not under his control. The circle we form around Jesus' word must be able to value good being done in ways we wouldn't do it, by people we can't keep tabs on.

SERVICE OF THE WORD

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter:

like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in † Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

God Is Here! vs. 1 & 2



1 God is here! As we your peo - ple meet to of - fer
 2 Here are sym - bols to re - mind us of our life - long
 3 Here our chil - dren find a wel - come in the Shep - herd's
 4 Lord of all, of church and king - dom, in an age of



praise and prayer, may we find in full - er mea - sure
 need of grace; here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit;
 flock and fold; here as bread and wine are tak - en,
 change and doubt, keep us faith - ful to the gos - pel;



what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the
 here the cross has cen - tral place. Here in hon - es -
 Christ sus - tains us as of old. Here the ser - vants
 help us work your pur - pose out. Here, in this day's



world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
 ty of preach - ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
 of the Ser - vant seek in wor - ship to ex - plore
 ded - i - ca - tion, all we have to give, re - ceive;



wait the com - ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
 here, in new - ness and re - new - al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
 what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.
 we, who can - not live with - out you, we a - dore you! We be - lieve!

Text: Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
 Music: ABBOT'S LEIGH, Cyril V. Taylor, 1907–1991
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APOSTOLIC GREETING & THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

Introduction to the Lesson: *What constitutes legitimate need and legitimate leadership is the focus of this reading. God provides manna in the wilderness, yet the people crave meat. What is truly needful? God bestows the spirit on seventy elders, yet two men not*

designated as leaders prophesy in the power of God's spirit. What constitutes real leadership?

Reader: ⁴The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, "If only we had meat to eat! ⁵We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; ⁶but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at."

¹⁰Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the LORD became very angry, and Moses was displeased. ¹¹So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? ¹²Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child, to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors'? ¹³Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, 'Give us meat to eat!' ¹⁴I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. ¹⁵If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery."

¹⁶So the LORD said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you."

²⁴So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. ²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

²⁶Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit on them!"

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING James 5:13-20

Introduction to the Lesson: Marks of the Christian community include praying for those who are sick and in need, celebrating with those in good health, restoring those who have strayed, confessing sins to one another, and offering forgiveness to each other.

Reader: ¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the

Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

¹⁹My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, ²⁰you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 9:38-50

Introduction to the Gospel: *On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus teaches his disciples about ministry that involves service and sacrifice. His disciples are slow to realize that these words apply to them as well as to others.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Mark in the 9th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: ³⁸John said to [Jesus,] “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. ⁴⁰Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

⁴²“If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. ⁴³If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. ⁴⁵And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

⁴⁹“For everyone will be salted with fire. ⁵⁰Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

What to Leave Behind

If you were stranded on a desert island, what five items would you want to have with you? Or if you only had a minute to grab one possession before leaving the rest behind, what would you take? These kinds of thought experiments invite us to clarify what's most important to us while reminding us that, frankly, we have a lot of things we could probably do without.

In today's gospel, Jesus challenges us to take a similar look at ourselves. What parts of ourselves do we need to leave behind as we follow Christ? Maybe it's our perfectionism or our need for control. Maybe it's our desire to escape through addictions or distractions. Maybe it's our harsh judgments about ourselves or others or a broken image of ourselves. Whatever our stumbling block is, Jesus calls us to leave it behind.

Yet, the gruesomeness of Jesus' images—leaving behind body parts—suggests he understands that this isn't easy work. Often our most harmful patterns and behaviors are the hardest to leave behind, because in some way we brought them into our lives to protect us from what scared us the most about ourselves and the world around us. Jesus stands with us to give us courage to look at ourselves fully as we are. He looks at us not with judgment but with love and grace. He invites us to find in him a new source of comfort and security, to let go of our old selves and cling to him and to his cross.

When we take up this cross, Jesus will provide everything else that we need for the journey as his followers—strength and courage, endurance and patience, hope and love. Today in this Christian assembly, we walk through this journey together, encouraging one another with words of peace and feeding one another with Christ's own body and blood given for us.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *God Is Here! vs. 3 & 4*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: We pray for the church and its ministry. Bless the newly baptized and encourage them in their journey of faith. Sustain all members of the body of Christ in lives of prayer, service, and worship. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray for natural wonders of your creation. Restore damaged forests, waterways and natural habitats and lead us to be good stewards of what you have provided. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray for those in authority. Give them wise minds and compassionate hearts. Strengthen in them a desire to protect the vulnerable and care for those underserved. Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray for those who are struggling with cancer, dementia, or any other disease *especially* those on the prayer list of Grace Lutheran Church, those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters, and those we name now with our lips or in our hearts. Provide them with peace and resilience for the days ahead. Sustain caregivers with energy and patience. Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray for the worship leaders of this congregation: musicians, readers, acolytes, and ushers. Bless us through their ministry and grant them the passion to continue in their service. Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We give thanks for all your saints, those we have loved and known and those from every time and place, but especially those within our Memorial Garden. Continue to guide us by their example and reassure us of your promised salvation. Lord, in your mercy,
Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: God of abundance, you cause streams to break forth in the desert and manna to rain from the heavens. Accept the gifts you have first given us. Unite them with the offering of our lives to nourish the world you love so dearly; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: 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.

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.

BLESSING

Worship Leader: People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, † one God, bless you now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life vs. 1, 4 & 6



1 Where cross the crowd-ed ways of life, where sound the
 2 In haunts of wretch-ed - ness and need, on shad - owed
 3 From ten - der child-hood's help - less - ness, from hu - man
 4 The cup of wa - ter giv'n for you still holds the



cries of race and clan, a - bove the noise of
 thresh - olds dark with fears, from paths where hide the
 grief and bur - dened toil, from fam - ished souls, from
 fresh - ness of your grace; yet long these mul - ti -



self - ish strife, we hear your voice, O Son of Man.
 lures of greed, we catch the vi - sion of your tears.
 sor - row's stress, your heart has nev - er known re - coil.
 tudes to view the strong com - pas - sion in your face.

5 O Master, from the mountainside
 make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
 among these restless throngs abide;
 oh, tread the city's streets again;

6 Till all the world shall learn your love,
 and follow where your feet have trod;
 till glorious from your heav'n above
 shall come the city of our God.

Text: Frank M. North, 1850–1935, alt.

Music: WALTON, W. Gardiner, Sacred Melodies, 1815

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DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now as this service of worship is ending, this week's service to the world is beginning! Go in peace. The living Word dwells in you.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

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