

The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 21, 2025

Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

Lutheran Service Book 350, Lutheran Worship 34, The Lutheran Hymnal 55



1 Come, Thou pre - cious Ran - som, come, On - ly hope for
2 En - ter now my wait - ing heart, Glo - rious King and
3 My ho - san - nas and my palms Gra - cious - ly re -
4 Hail! Ho - san - na, Da - vid's Son! Je - sus, hear our



sin - ful mor - tals! Come, O Sav - ior of the world!
Lord most ho - ly. Dwell in me and ne'er de - part,
ceive, I pray Thee; Ev - er - more, as best I can,
sup - pli - ca - tion! Let Thy king - dom, scep - ter, crown,



O - pen are to Thee all por - tals. Come, Thy beau - ty
Though I am but poor and low - ly. Ah, what rich - es
Sav - ior, I will hom - age pay Thee, And in faith I
Bring us bless - ing and sal - va - tion, That for - ev - er



let us see; Anx - ious - ly we wait for Thee.
will be mine When Thou art my guest di - vine!
will em - brace, Lord, Thy mer - it through Thy grace.
we may sing: Hail! Ho - san - na to our King.

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

L If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?

C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C **God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

(Luke 18:13)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Introit Psalm 119:137–140, 142; antiphon Psalm 119:144

L Your testimonies are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.

C **Righteous are you, O Lord,
and right are your just decrees.**

L You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness
and in all faithfulness.

C **My zeal consumes me,
because my foes forget your words.**

L Your promise is well tried,
and your servant loves it.

C **Your righteousness is righteous forever,
and your law is true.**

C **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.**

L Your testimonies are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** **Have mercy on us.**

L O Christ, **C** **Have mercy on us.**

L O Lord, **C** **Have mercy on us.**

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

L Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

C **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:

C **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.

C **For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: O Lord, keep Your Church in Your perpetual mercy; and because without You we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C** Amen.

Amos 8:4–7

⁴Hear this, you who trample on the needy
and bring the poor of the land to an end,
⁵saying, “When will the new moon be over,
that we may sell grain?
And the Sabbath,
that we may offer wheat for sale,
that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great
and deal deceitfully with false balances,
⁶that we may buy the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and sell the chaff of the wheat?”

⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
“Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.”

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

- L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,
- C** for those who fear him lack nothing!
- L** Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
- C** but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Psalm 113

- L** ¹Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!
- C** ²**Blessèd be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore!**
- L** ³From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!
- C** ⁴**The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens!**
- L** ⁵Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,
- C** ⁶**who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?**
- L** ⁷He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
- C** ⁸**to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.**
- L** ⁹He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.
- C** Praise the LORD!

1 Timothy 2:1–15

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.

Luke 16:1–15

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 16th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹[Jesus] also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. ²And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’ ³And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ ⁵So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ ⁸The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

¹⁰“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in that which is another’s, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

¹⁴The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. ¹⁵And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

The Apostles' Creed

C 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

All Depends on Our Possessing

Lutheran Service Book 732, Lutheran Worship 415, The Lutheran Hymnal 425



1 All de - pends on our pos - sess - ing God's a - bun - dant
2 He who to this day has fed me And to man - y
3 Man - y spend their lives in fret - ting O - ver tri - fles
4 When with sor - row I am strick - en, Hope a - new my



grace and bless - ing, Though all earth - ly wealth de - part.
joys has led me Is and ev - er shall be mine.
and in get - ting Things that have no sol - id ground.
heart will quick - en; All my long - ing shall be stilled.



They who trust with faith un - shak - en By their God are
He who ev - er gent - ly schools me, He who dai - ly
I shall strive to win a trea - sure That will bring me
To His lov - ing - kind - ness ten - der Soul and bod - y



not for - sak - en And will keep a daunt - less heart.
guides and rules me Will re - main my help di - vine.
last - ing plea - sure And that now is sel - dom found.
I sur - ren - der, For on God a - lone I build.

5 Well He knows what best to grant me;
All the longing hopes that haunt me,
Joy and sorrow, have their day.
I shall doubt His wisdom never;
As God wills, so be it ever;
I commit to Him my way.

6 If my days on earth He lengthen,
God my weary soul will strengthen;
All my trust in Him I place.
Earthly wealth is not abiding,
Like a stream away is gliding;
Safe I anchor in His grace.

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Devotional thoughts:

Our Gospel lesson presents us with a difficult parable. But most of the difficulty goes away by carefully reading it. Let me give it away. Jesus is not commending dishonesty. He is commending shrewdness!

The original problem with the dishonest manager is not that he was stealing rather he was wasting what was entrusted to him. The Greek word translated as “wasting” can also be translated as “squandering.”

We have been reading through Luke in our Gospel lessons. Last week we heard the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. In Luke 15, they are followed by the Parable of the Prodigal Son which we read back on the Fourth Sunday in Lent.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Parable of the Dishonest Manager are connected by this one word. It is translated in Luke 15:13 as squander and in Luke 16:1 as waste.

To squander or waste our resources is not sin, in and of itself. But wasting what we have displays a lack of wisdom and judgment. In both the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Parable of the Dishonest Manager squandering led to difficulties. In the first case, the Prodigal Son was left destitute. In the second place, the manager faced certain ruin.

When the Prodigal Son “came to his senses” (Luke 15:17 NIV), he made a wise and wholesome decision to return to his father’s house and beg for mercy. The manager did not come to his senses but he was confronted with the consequences of his folly. Then, in his own mind, he chose to do something that he deemed to be wise.

There is some debate about whether his reduction of the debtors’ bills was legal. He possibly still had the authority to negotiate on behalf of the master. But his actions were certainly unethical. While he failed in his responsibility to act in the owner’s best interest, he knew how to shrewdly act in his own best interest!

His master (in my opinion, sarcastically) commended his dishonest manager for his shrewdness. His ability to think clearly was heightened when his own future was at stake.

Jesus then gave us his intended application for this parable. He said, “For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light” (Luke 16:8). The followers of Jesus are engaged in the most important task of making disciples of all nations. They, above all people, must use every ounce of wisdom given to them. In Matthew 10:16 (KJV), Jesus said, “Be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”

Jesus goes on to say, “I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings” (Luke 16:9). He directs God’s people to use earthly wealth for eternal purposes. Regarding this verse, St. Augustine says, “Give alms of your righteous labors.”¹

How are we to be faithful in our use of wealth? Faithfulness with money means using it for God’s intended purpose. God intends for us to use His blessings to provide for our daily bread. Luther reminds us in his Small Catechism: “Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals, money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children, devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government, good weather, peace, health, self-control, good reputation, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

Fathers and mothers are charged with using their resources to provide for their families. We all have the responsibility of caring for the poor and needy. God expects us to provide properly for pastors and church workers. He intends for us to support the education of children as they are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

¹Edward A. Engelbrecht, *The Lutheran Study Bible*, 1749 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

Jesus goes on to say, “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Luke 16:13). In my experience, these are some of the most difficult words for churches to hear. I have endured countless meetings in which it seemed as though the church was more devoted to serving money than serving the Lord.

What is fiscal responsibility in the church? It is generosity. It is faithfulness. It is trusting the Lord to provide for our every need. Fiscal responsibility in the church looks like fiscal irresponsibility to the world.

God does not call us to squander and waste our money but He does call us to use it for His eternal purposes.

God was lavishly generous in His love for us. He sent Jesus to save us from sin, death, and the devil. He did this, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, His innocent suffering and death! (1 Peter 1:18-19).

God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). Because God has been so generous with us, may we be mindful to use our time, talents, and treasures to accomplish His purpose of seeking and saving the lost.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

Prayers

L O Lord, You have instructed us through the apostle Paul “that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.” In answer to Your gracious invitation, we offer to You our prayers and thank You for hearing our petitions.

C Amen.

L Kind Father, Your Son declared to us that we cannot serve You and also be devoted to money. Free us from being preoccupied with the goods of this world. Grant that we may set our hearts on the joys of Your kingdom and the inheritance that never fades.

C Amen.

L Almighty Father, You desire all to be saved. Help us to seek those who forget Your Word and call them to repentance and faith, so that they also would rejoice in Your righteousness and salvation.

C Amen.

L O Lord, give us vigilant and wise leaders. Be with all who serve to keep us safe. Bring peace and harmony to our nation in this time of contentiousness. Protect those in harm’s way because of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East that cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer.

C Amen.

L Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow, and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will. Help each of us to bear our crosses with patience and grace.

C Amen.

L O Lord, our God, whose mercies are new every morning, we give You thanks and praise for all Your kindness toward us, and we pray You to grant us the will and desire to worship You joyfully, to serve You faithfully and to proclaim boldly Your mighty acts of deliverance through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom we offer to You these prayers, and in whom we trust for all things; to You alone be glory, honor, worship and praise.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C 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.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Christ, the Life of All the Living

Lutheran Service Book 420, Lutheran Worship 94, The Lutheran Hymnal 151



1 Christ, the life of all the liv - ing, Christ, the death of
2 Thou, ah! Thou, hast tak - en on Thee Bonds and stripes, a
3 Thou hast borne the smit - ing on - ly That my wounds might
4 Heart - less scof - fers did sur - round Thee, Treat - ing Thee with



death, our foe, Who, Thy - self for me once giv - ing
cru - el rod; Pain and scorn were heaped up - on Thee,
all be whole; Thou hast suf - fered, sad and lone - ly,
shame - ful scorn And with pierc - ing thorns they crowned Thee.



To the dark - est depths of woe: Through Thy suf - f'rings,
O Thou sin - less Son of God! Thus didst Thou my
Rest to give my wea - ry soul; Yea, the curse of
All dis - grace Thou, Lord, hast borne, That as Thine Thou



death, and mer - it I e - ter - nal life in - her - it.
soul de - liv - er From the bonds of sin for - ev - er.
God en - dur - ing, Bless - ing un - to me se - cur - ing.
might - est own me And with heav'n - ly glo - ry crown me.



Thou-sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.
Thou-sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.
Thou-sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.
Thou-sand, thou - sand thanks shall be, Dear - est Je - sus, un - to Thee.

5 Thou hast suffered men to bruise Thee,
That from pain I might be free;
Falsely did Thy foes accuse Thee:
Thence I gain security;
Comfortless Thy soul did languish
Me to comfort in my anguish.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

6 Thou hast suffered great affliction
And hast borne it patiently,
Even death by crucifixion,
Fully to atone for me;
Thou didst choose to be tormented
That my doom should be prevented.
Thousand, thousand thanks shall be,
Dearest Jesus, unto Thee.

7 Then, for all that wrought my pardon,
For Thy sorrows deep and sore,
For Thine anguish in the Garden,
I will thank Thee evermore,
Thank Thee for Thy groaning, sighing,
For Thy bleeding and Thy dying,
For that last triumphant cry,
And shall praise Thee, Lord, on high.

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Week of THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST September 22—27, 2025

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you mediate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 119:137–140, 142; antiphon Psalm 119:144

- L** Your testimonies are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.
- C** Righteous are you, O Lord,
and right are your just decrees.
- L** You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness
and in all faithfulness.
- C** My zeal consumes me,
because my foes forget your words.
- L** Your promise is well tried,
and your servant loves it.
- C** Your righteousness is righteous forever,
and your law is true.
- C** 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.
- L** Your testimonies are righteous forever;
give me understanding that I may live.

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have mercy on us. |

Are the Lord's decrees righteous or unrighteous? Our introit declares them to be righteous.

Ungodly people always rebel against God's word. They expect God to agree with their self-serving desires and opinions.

Our old sinful selves also rebel against God's just decrees. It is common today for Christians to reject the parts of God's word that they find to be distasteful or contrary to popular opinion.

An important aspect of faith is trusting that God's righteous statements are authentically true. Sometimes this means rejecting our human wisdom and submitting to God's declarations of truth.

The most unreasonable thing God has declared is His love for sinners. Human insight says, "Love your friends and hate your enemies." Jesus says, "Love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44). This is His righteous decree. It seems utterly ridiculous to our human way of thinking but it is God's way.

God so loved His enemies that He sent His only-begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. This is His righteous testimony that lasts forever. Thanks be to God!

Let us pray: O merciful Lord, thank You for Your righteous decrees and wonderful promises in Jesus. Grant that we would ever trust and believe Your holy word through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday

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| L | In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. |
| C | Amen. |

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

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|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| L | Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia. |
| C | Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia. |

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have mercy on us. |

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| L | Let us pray: O Lord, keep Your Church in Your perpetual mercy; and because without You we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. |
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- | | |
|----------|--------------|
| C | Amen. |
|----------|--------------|

As I read the collect for this week, I was reminded of the importance of God's mercy and its connection to our salvation. We often talk about faith and salvation or grace and salvation. However, God's mercy is also intimately connected to salvation. It was common in the early Church for people to say that we are saved by mercy. Here is a quotation from The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV – Justification, that I found to be helpful in understanding mercy and salvation:

⁵³ Whenever we speak of justifying faith, we must keep in mind that these three objects belong together: the promise, grace, and Christ's merits as the price and atonement. The promise is received through faith. Grace excludes our merits and means that the benefit is offered only through mercy. Christ's merits are the price, because there must be a certain atonement for our sins. ⁵⁴ Scripture frequently cries out for mercy; the Holy Fathers often say that we are saved by mercy. ⁵⁵ Therefore, whenever mercy is mentioned, we must keep in mind that faith, which receives the promise of mercy, is required there. Again, whenever we speak about faith, we want an object of faith to be understood, namely, the promised mercy. ⁵⁶ For faith justifies and saves, not because it is a worthy work in itself, but only because it receives the promised mercy.²

Let us pray: O Lord, keep Your Church in Your perpetual mercy; and because without You we cannot but fall, preserve us from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. **The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.**

Psalms 113

L ¹Praise the LORD!
Praise, O servants of the LORD, praise the name of the LORD!
C ²**Blessèd be the name of the LORD from this time forth and forevermore!**
L ³From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!
C ⁴**The LORD is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens!**
L ⁵Who is like the LORD our God, who is seated on high,
C ⁶**who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?**
L ⁷He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
C ⁸**to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people.**
L ⁹He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.
C **Praise the LORD!**

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have mercy on us.

²*Concordia : The Lutheran Confessions*, Edited by Paul Timothy McCain, 89 (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).

Psalm 113 begins and ends with “Hallelujah!” which is Hebrew for “Praise the Lord!” What makes you sing Hallelujah? (Note: Hallelujah is a transliteration of the Hebrew. Alleluia is the transliteration of the Greek.)

The first six verses of the psalm describe the Lord and our praise. Verses 7-9 explain the reason for our praise. “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people. He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.”

If you pause for a moment after reading these verses, you might remember Hannah’s prayer when she brought her son, Samuel, to serve in the temple with Eli. She said, “He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes” (1 Samuel 2:8). She longed for a child and God answered her prayer. She praised the Lord for His goodness and mercy.

The poor are often without hope. God cares deeply for them. Proverbs 19:17 tells us, “Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.” When God cares for the poor through our actions, they sing, “Hallelujah!”

Hallelujah reminds me of Easter. God has raised up this poor miserable sinner to life and salvation through Jesus’ death and resurrection! This makes me sing Hallelujah, Praise the Lord!

God’s mercy is new every morning. It lasts all through the day. “From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the LORD is to be praised!” (verse 3). May all our days be filled with Hallelujahs.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for caring for us in our spiritual poverty. Grant that we would always praise the name of the LORD because of the salvation granted to us through Jesus. Amen.

Thursday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Amos 8:4–7

⁴Hear this, you who trample on the needy
and bring the poor of the land to an end,
⁵saying, “When will the new moon be over,
that we may sell grain?
And the Sabbath,
that we may offer wheat for sale,
that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great
and deal deceitfully with false balances,
⁶that we may buy the poor for silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals
and sell the chaff of the wheat?”

⁷The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:
“Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.”

As you know, money, in and of itself, is not sinful. It is a tool that can be used for good or evil. However, greed and the love of money lead to dreadful sins.

Amos speaks God’s words of judgment on those “who trample on the needy” and bring the poor to an end because they love wealth and commerce. There is an ongoing debate about wealth in our country. Some decry the imbalance in the distribution of wealth. The phrase “distribution of wealth” is misleading. It implies that someone has wealth and is distributing it unequally. Christians do not condemn wealth. Instead, Christians condemn dishonest gain. Wealth earned through honest industry or received from the generosity of others is a great blessing.

However, we must recognize that there always have been those who gain wealth through fraud and deceit. They don’t care who they hurt through their schemes.

Telephone and internet fraud are rampant but they are not the only ways the poor are hurt. Amos reminds us that some increase their wealth by providing less than what is promised. This can happen through false measures or scales. Or sometimes people are cheated when they are sold inferior products.

Swindlers and cheats believe that they are more clever than their victims. They are convinced that there are no consequences to their evil actions. But God is not fooled or deceived. He will never forget any of their deeds. He will bring judgment upon them.

God judges all sin. No one is immune. However, God sent Jesus to receive the consequence and judgment that our sin deserves.

Now is the time to repent and receive the blessings of forgiveness that He won for us on the cross. Those who are guilty of dishonest commerce can also be forgiven. They are also called to repentance. The words of Jesus to the woman caught in adultery are for them, too. “Go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for Your love and care for those who are poor. Grant them comfort and grace. Move us to share our blessings with those who are less fortunate. Where we have sinned, we beg Your forgiveness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have mercy on us.

1 Timothy 2:1–15

¹First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the

man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

⁸I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling; ⁹likewise also that women should adorn themselves in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire, ¹⁰but with what is proper for women who profess godliness—with good works. ¹¹Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. ¹²I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. ¹³For Adam was formed first, then Eve; ¹⁴and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. ¹⁵Yet she will be saved through childbearing—if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.

We just finished an election year. However, it seems that some people haven't heard the news. We continue to be bombarded with political messages almost 24 hours a day. For me, this contributes to an unpleasantness of life. I thank God that I live where I have the privilege to vote and I would never want to give that up. Nevertheless, the animosity expressed between political parties is disconcerting.

No matter which party is in power, almost half the country is unhappy. I know Christians on both sides of the political divide. We are free to disagree with each other when we cast our votes. There is no perfect candidate.

Whether or not your chosen candidate was elected, you are obligated to pray for the winner. The Apostle Paul says, "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions." While we don't have kings in our country, we do have those in high positions. They need our prayers.

I have lived through the administration of fourteen presidents of the United States and twelve prime ministers of Canada. As far as I know, they have all been Christians. This is a great blessing. It is one that the Apostle Paul and the early Church did not experience. When Paul wrote these words to Timothy, the first Christian Roman emperor was still centuries in the future. Yet, he urged Christians to pray for pagan rulers. Can we do any less?

The purpose of our prayers is "that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." When the Christian people are allowed to lead peaceful and quiet lives, we are free to focus on the task of bringing the Gospel of salvation to all the people around us.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He died for all people. May we never become so distracted by politics that we forget His Great Commission to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). Remember, no matter who is elected, Jesus has promised, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for the privilege of living in a democracy. Give us wise and godly leaders who honor Your holy law. Move us to remember them in our prayers that Your Kingdom may flourish and more people will come to faith in our savior, Jesus. Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: 1 Tim. 2:5–6a

L Alleluia, Alleluia. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all. Alleluia.

Gradual Psalm 34:9, 19, alt.

- L** Fear the Lord, you his saints,
C for those who fear him lack nothing!
L Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
C but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have mercy on us.

1 Timothy 2:5-7

⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

God's people have always been surrounded by false gods. Idolatry was a problem throughout Old Testament times. It is no accident that God gave us the very first commandment, "You shall have no other gods."

It is easy to see what has been called "coarse idolatry." This is the public worship of false gods and idols. God clearly forbids this. The Christian Church must never permit syncretism of any kind. It clearly violates God's law.

But the first commandment also forbids more "subtle idolatry." This happens when we fear, love, and trust something more than God. It also happens when we give worship and honor that is due to God to some other creature, thing, or activity.

There is also only one way to approach the true God. It is through Christ Jesus who is the only mediator between God and man.

God is under no obligation to hear our prayers or grant us forgiveness except that Jesus has reconciled us to our heavenly Father. No matter how sincere people are, they may not approach our holy God except through the mediation of our savior Jesus who gave His life as a ransom for all.

The Apostle Paul was a dedicated Pharisee. But God chose him to bring the message of salvation to the Gentiles who worshiped false gods.

Paul has not given us the option of saying that all expressions of religion are equally valuable. He knew that Christ was the only way to approach God.

We thank God that He has brought us into His family through Jesus. We continue the work begun by the Apostle Paul of bringing faith and truth to those who do not yet believe in Jesus.

Let us pray: O Lord, thank You for sending Jesus to be our mediator. Grant us true faithfulness to You and Your word through Him. Grant that we would gladly take up the task first given to Your Apostles to make disciples of all nations through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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