

Sunday, July 19, 2020

Proper 11, Year A

7th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

It is an age-old question: why is there evil in the world? In the parable of the wheat and the weeds Jesus suggests that both grow together until the harvest. With Paul, we long for the day that all creation will be set free from bondage and suffering. Having both weeds and wheat within us, we humbly place our hope in the promises of God, and from the Lord's table we go forth to bear the fruit of justice and mercy.

Prayer of the Day

Faithful God, most merciful judge, you care for your children with firmness and compassion. By your Spirit nurture us who live in your kingdom, that we may be rooted in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Psalm 86:11-15](#)

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth. (*Ps. 86:11*)

[Romans 8:14-25](#)

The revealing of the children of God

[Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#)

The parable of the weeds

Psalm: Psalm 86:11-15

Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth. (Ps. 86:11)

¹¹Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

¹²I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
and glorify your name forevermore.

¹³For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the pit of death.

¹⁴The arrogant rise up against me, O God,
and a band of violent people seeks my life;
they have not set you before their eyes.

¹⁵But you, O Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,
slow to anger, and full of kindness and truth.

Second Reading: Romans 8:14-25

For Paul, true spirituality means that we experience the reality of the Spirit, which enables us to pray as God's children, keeps us in solidarity with creation, and gives us unseen hope that God will liberate us and creation from bondage to death and decay.

¹⁴For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" ¹⁶it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. ¹⁹For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; ²⁰for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; ²³and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Gospel: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Jesus tells a parable about the coexistence of good and evil in this world. God's judgment will remove all evildoers and causes of sin, but not until the end of human history.

²⁴[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the

field.”³⁷ He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!”

Prayers of Gratitude for Unexpected Pandemic Joys

Pastor: Our prayers this morning are a gathering of the people of Grace’s joys during the time of pandemic. We pause to thank God for sustaining us, for granting us gifts of connection, love, hope, strength, and a sense of purpose in spite of the many difficulties and struggles of this time. (Next week we’ll be praying for healing for the difficulties raised up in last week’s gathering exercise.)

Lector: When I say “Bless we the LORD,” you respond, “**THANKS BE TO GOD.**”

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the Church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

We thank you, O God, for the gift of unhurried time – your gift of time for us, O God – to be reconnected and renewed within our households, even within the constraints of pandemic life: time to look back over our years together and remember our blessings; time for reflection; time for going deeper into neglected projects; time for puzzles! time to discover new ways to use our isolation time; time to explore multiple online church offerings to receive their messages. *pause*

We praise you for unexpected free time,
for time to relax,
for the time we can share with our young adults and grown children when we can visit;
for time to explore and work on new ventures
or “work” details around the house
or to learn new things;
and for time to sit
– on porch or by the firepit or on the deck.

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Heavenly Father, you remind us in this season of the special gift of our families. We bless you for this unexpected enrichment with them: for family bike rides; in the joy of a new grandchild; for a son’s recent engagement;

for the good health of loved ones; for the pleasure of working on projects together with family members.

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Eternal God, we thank you for the joys of our homes and yards: for baby rabbits, baby birds, birds singing, for cardinals! For time at home to watch this Spring unfold in our gardens. For the ability to work from home without a commute, without interruptions. For more family dinners, more baking and cooking, and for our pets.

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

O God of heaven and earth, we see your hand also in the deeper movement and rightness of this time, or some part of it:

our children's choices of life partners during this time of isolation, a child's growth in a new or unexpected way, the sense that our nation may finally confront racial injustice, seeing community come together to protect each other or to help with donations.

For your guidance and protection in this time of vulnerability and change, and for these movements toward growth and wholeness:

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Faithful God, we praise you for the wonder of our connection as Church – that transmits even over the Internet! Worship on YouTube, and when we are isolated from each other, even by seeing pictures of each other online, and the ability to study your Word online with friends far away.

Bless we the LORD: **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

We thank you for good neighbors, for the web of connections with friends, enhanced by phone and internet:

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

Gracious God, we thank you for the beginning signs of opening up: for being able to get away from Pennsylvania for a break; for time away with a loved one at the beach;

for getting out to see a loved one; and for Grace being able to return to worship in person. For these beginnings and for the ways they sustain us in hope for the future:

Bless we the LORD: **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

God of life, those who have died in you shine like the sun in your endless kingdom. We remember with thanksgiving the saints of all times and places, naming before you those dear to us: Momma Jean Goetter; John Green, Jess

Moran's uncle; Victor Dominguez, Jesus Tula's uncle, lost to Covid-19; and Beto Dominguez, Jesus Tula's cousin. Gather us with them on the day of salvation.

Bless we the LORD:

THANKS BE TO GOD.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God, the creator, ✝ Jesus, the Christ,
and the Holy Spirit, the comforter,
bless you and keep you in eternal love.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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Prayers prepared by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman with material shared by Grace members in an exercise in worship on 7/12/20

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