

Sunday, August 9, 2020

Proper 14, Year A, X after Pentecost

Introduction

Elijah finds the presence of God not in earthquake, wind, or fire, but in the sound of sheer silence. When the disciples face a great storm on the sea, they cry out with fear. Jesus says: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." Amid the storms of life, we gather to seek the calm presence of Christ that soothes our fears. In comforting words of scripture and in the refreshing bread and cup of the eucharist, God grants us peace and sends us forth to be a sign of God's presence to others.

Prayer of the Day

O God our defender, storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid. Rescue your people from despair, deliver your sons and daughters from fear, and preserve us in the faith of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Psalm 85:8-13](#)

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying. *(Ps. 85:8)*

[Romans 10:5-15](#)

Hearing and confessing the word of faith

[Matthew 14:22-33](#)

Jesus walking on the sea

Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying. (Ps. 85:8)

- ⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to you.
- ⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.
- ¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
- ¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
- ¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.
- ¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.

Second Reading: Romans 10:5-15

A right relationship with God is not something we achieve by heroic efforts. It is a gift received in the proclamation whose content is Jesus Christ. This proclaimed word creates our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence Christian proclamation is an indispensable component of God's saving actions.

⁵Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." ⁶But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) ⁷or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). ⁸But what does it say?

"The word is near you,
on your lips and in your heart"

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. ¹¹The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ¹²For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. ¹³For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

¹⁴But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-33

Matthew's gospel typically portrays Jesus' disciples as people of "little faith," who fail despite their best intentions. In this story, Matthew shows how Jesus comes to the disciples when they are in trouble and sustains them in their time of fear and doubt.

²²[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee], while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, "Lord, in your mercy," you respond, "**Hear our prayer.**"

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.

For your whole church throughout the world. Give courage in the midst of storms, so that we see and hear Jesus calling: "Take heart, it is I: do not be afraid."

May we follow Christ wherever he leads.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the well-being of your creation. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Help the human family endeavor to sustain and be sustained by the resources of your hand.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For the nations and their leaders. In you, steadfast love and faithfulness meet, and righteousness and peace kiss. May nations in conflict know the peace that is the fruit of justice, and the justice that is the path to peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For those in need. Everyone who calls upon your name will be saved. Accompany all who are lonely, hear the voices of those who cry out in anguish, and support those who are frustrated in their search for an affordable place to live. We pray for those suffering this day.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For our beloved Grace Church. You have gathered us here today as your people and we thank you for this gift. We pray for those who are new to this community, for students and teachers preparing for a new school year, for all who feel unsafe coming to worship in person, and for those struggling with unexpected hardship. Supply us generously with your grace for our life together.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for the offerings we bring.

Our ordinary gifts seem small when we stand in your presence. Multiply the gifts we are able to offer to make them abundant, not merely enough, that you may be seen through us.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Hear now the prayers of our hearts as we offer them before you both silently and aloud:

Silence for the prayers of people's hearts

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give you thanks, O God, for the saints of the whole church from every time and place, and for the saints in our lives and communities whom you have gathered to yourself. We thank you for their lives and for their witness.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

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 adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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