

Sunday, August 23, 2020

Proper 17, Year A

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

Jesus declares that the church will be built on the rock of Peter's bold confession of faith. God's word of reconciliation and God's mercy are keys to the church's mission. Paul urges us to not be conformed to this world but to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice, using our individual gifts to build up the body of Christ.

Prayer of the Day

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Psalm 138](#):1-4

O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever. (*Ps. 138:8*)

[Romans 12:1-8](#)

One body in Christ, with gifts that differ

[Matthew 16:13-20](#)

The profession of Peter's faith

Reading: Psalm 138:1-4

O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever. (*Ps. 138:8*)

¹I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I will sing your praise.

²I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

³When I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength within me.

Reading: Romans 12:1-8

In response to God's merciful activity, we are to worship by living holistic, God-pleasing lives. Our values and viewpoints are not molded by the time in which we live but are transformed by the Spirit's renewing work. God's grace empowers

different forms of service among Christians, but all forms of ministry function to build up the body of Christ.

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20

At a climactic point in Jesus' ministry, God reveals to Peter that Jesus is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," and Jesus responds with the promise of a church that will overcome the very gates of Hades.

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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.

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

You call us into this community of Grace, in which we, though many, are one in Christ. May we recognize in ourselves and in one another the unique gifts you have given us for the building up of the church for the sake of the world.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

O Lord, our Rock, you restore your people to joy and gladness. In blessed memory and hope, we thank you for the lives of our beloved dead, especially those we name before you now in our hearts:

Silence as we name loved ones in our hearts...

Bring us with them to our heavenly home.

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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