

Sunday, September 27, 2020, Year A Proper 21, XVII after Pentecost

Introduction

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own.

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Readings and Psalm

[Philippians 2:5-11](#)

Christ humbled to the point of death on a cross

[Psalm 25:1-9](#)

Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)

[Matthew 21:23-32](#)

A parable of doing God's will

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,
¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

A The Word of the Lord.
C **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-9

Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love. (Ps. 25:6)

¹To you, O LORD,
I lift up my soul.
²My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
³Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
⁴Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.
⁵Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.
⁶Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.
⁷Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.
⁸You are gracious and upright, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners in your way.
⁹You lead the lowly in justice
and teach the lowly your way.

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who

gave you this authority?”²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things.²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.”²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went.³⁰ The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go.³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

Prayers of Intercession

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

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence is held as we gather our prayers.

In this and every place, O Lord God: give your church unity in Christ Jesus. Inspire all who have been baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us and through us.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Jesus knew life as we know it – in the body, in the world, even unto death. We lift the body of your creation, O God, into your care: Mend and redeem the Earth ravaged by flood and wildfires, and use us as instruments of your life and healing.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray for the nations of the world, and for our own United States of America. Where sin abounds, give us new hearts. Teach us to trust you and each other.

Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We remember the wider needs of our time within our own community and just beyond: those who hunger; those who struggle to find work or enough work.

Bless ministries of care in our community; make us into signs of your mercy and compassion for our neighbors.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

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 thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The LORD look upon you with favor and [little cross here] give you peace.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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