

Home Service for June 22, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

When fear and despair try to run the show, hope and faith bring us back to God, whose love is stronger still.

Call to Worship:

As we have been baptized into Christ, we are clothed with Christ.
And if we belong to Christ, then we are Abraham's offspring
And heirs according to the promise. Thanks be to God.

Opening Prayer:

God of power and might, bring your awesome presence into our worship and our world. Open us to your wholeness and healing and embolden us to answer your call, that we might face unafraid the demons of this world. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Loving and holy God, we confess that we hold tightly to our pride and resist your transforming grace. You offer us freedom and a welcome place in your family, yet we struggle, trying to earn what you have already given. We cling to our old ways of doing and thinking. You call us your beloved children. Help us hear and claim our new identity. Free us from the bonds of limited imagination and empower us to thrive in your life of faith and grace. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

Children of God: Faith has come, and we are free. Receive your forgiveness today.

Read Psalm 42

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
³My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me all day long,

“Where is your God?”
⁴ These things I remember
 as I pour out my soul:
 how I used to go to the house of God
 under the protection of the Mighty One^[d]
 with shouts of joy and praise
 among the festive throng.
⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.
⁶ My soul is downcast within me;
 therefore I will remember you
 from the land of the Jordan,
 the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.
⁷ Deep calls to deep
 in the roar of your waterfalls;
 all your waves and breakers
 have swept over me.
⁸ By day the Lord directs his love,
 at night his song is with me—
 a prayer to the God of my life.
⁹ I say to God my Rock,
 “Why have you forgotten me?
 Why must I go about mourning,
 oppressed by the enemy?”
¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony
 as my foes taunt me,
 saying to me all day long,
 “Where is your God?”
¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
 Why so disturbed within me?
 Put your hope in God,
 for I will yet praise him,
 my Savior and my God.

Prayers of the People:

Lord, we hear the stories in the Bible of Christ's forgiving love. We look at them from a distance, believing that we could never be forgiven by God. We want to measure our sins on a grand scale, but in truth it is the little ways in which we disown you and run from your presence that form the foundation of our sins. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to be open to the needs of others. We have so much that we can do, and sometimes, O Lord, we are overwhelmed by the needs. We become paralyzed and fearful. Ease our hearts and give us strength and courage to be active witnesses for you. Give us such faith that we may place our whole trust in you. This day we have brought before you the names of people near and dear to us to be lifted in prayer. Some of these needs are for healing, for comfort, for solace; others are prayers of celebration and joy. All of these things we offer to you. Help us to truly believe in your abiding love in answer to all prayers that we willingly place our lives in your care. Heal and restore us; for we ask this in Jesus' name. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

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

Read the Lesson: 1 Kings 19:1-15a

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. ² So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

³ Elijah was afraid^[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, ⁴ while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." ⁵ Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." ⁶ He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

⁷ The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” ⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁰ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

¹¹ The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.”

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?”

¹⁴ He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.”

¹⁵ The Lord said to him, “Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Galatians 3:23-29

Before the coming of this faith,^[a] we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 8:26-39

They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes,^[a] which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house,

but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

³⁰ Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

“Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³² A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

³⁴ When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵ and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷ Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left. ³⁸ The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

Message

Today, our Epistle Lesson talks about the eternal inheritance that God has provided for each of us. It is something that we have not deserved. It is an inheritance that we could not earn for ourselves. We have, as God’s inheritance yet to come and which is guaranteed already, the hope of eternal life. That is what can get us through those tough days here on earth. We look forward to the inheritance that is stored up for each one of us in heaven for eternity.

Make no mistake that what Paul writes here is to emphasize the difference between the devastating effect of the law and the power of Christ through the Gospel. Paul says we were held as prisoners, put into jail and locked up because of God’s law. The law is not able to save anybody. Instead, the law has the world locked up as prisoners. The law cannot save. Salvation only comes by faith. For verse 24 states: “The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.”

All but Christ has sinned. But by God's grace he has given us faith to realize that even though we are filled with sin, we are also forgiven through faith. By doing so, the Lord makes us heirs of eternal life according to his promise. God has promised and He fulfills His promises, even though you and I who are sinners God has made us His children. We are no longer utter prisoners of sin, but we are God's children.

Here is what Paul wanted these believers to know and understand. It is very clear when he says: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." By faith we were made God's children. Paul states: "For you who were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ." By grace and faith, we are clothed with Christ Jesus through Baptism in righteousness, holiness, and even sinlessness because our sins are forgiven. God no longer sees our sins but sees the righteousness of Christ who covers them up, and we are clothed with Christ. God makes us his children. We are reminded that it wasn't our choice, our desire or our effort, but God's choice.

This also means that the church is unified. For Paul writes: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The church has only one thing in common, Christ as their Savior. Each of these listed pairs were in conflict with each other during the early church. But now, Paul tells them that they are all one in Christ because of the cross of Christ. We are all God's children. If God loves us, it means that we have an inheritance. This divine adoption also means we have been set free from the bondage of sin. Paul writes that in verse 25: "Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law." Our faith saves us. It isn't faith combined with the law. We have a saving faith that understands the law and that the law is a guideline that we are given for direction in life.

Now we come to the last verse in our text when it says: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Abraham was synonymous with faith and believers. Paul was putting Gentiles, those who had been untouchable, unclean, rejected, now as part of Abraham's family. The Jews were already there, but the Gentiles were brought back in. We all are to inherit eternal life.

Today, you and I gather as Gentiles who for the longest time were on the outside of God's kingdom. We could almost say even outside of God's love. But God loves the whole world. By God's grace He brings us into his kingdom and makes us his children. We are not prisoners to sin, to the law. We are now God's children. We are God's children all because of His great love and divine grace and mercy. Salvation comes by the most supernatural means. God says we are born again of

God by Spirit, by water, and by the Word. Our heavenly Father makes us his children.

Jesus Christ gave up his life so that he might destroy the power of Satan, that he would unlock the door to heaven so that we can enter freely anytime that he calls us home. Knowing all this we are to be thankful children. Colossians 1:12,13 tells that we are to live lives that are giving thanks by stating: "Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves." Jesus, God's own Son is our brother. God who is Jesus' Father is our Father. Heaven, their home is our home, our inheritance. We are blessed as children of God. Let us never forget. Amen.

Benediction:

*Don't just hang out with Christ this week;
bring Christ to everyone you meet.
This is what Jesus invites us to do.
This is the faithful response to the many ways
Christ has healed and saved us.
Amen.*