

Home Service for July 13, 2025

## Welcome and Announcements

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

*If we are all people of God, who is our neighbor? The sinner, the saint, the outcast, the beloved, the oppressed, the powerful, the poor, and the wealthy. We all need God's love; we all need to love one another.*

## Call to Worship:

Beloved people of God, welcome to worship. We come to worship and to praise. With love for one another, we gather as neighbors. With love for God, we gather as God's community of love.

## Opening Prayer:

Loving God, thank you for being present in our lives and in this time of worship. Speak love to our hearts and wisdom to our minds, that we might grow in your knowledge of love and that our lives might bear the fruit of your knowledge and grace. Amen.

## Prayer of Confession:

Merciful God, help us remember to love and care for our neighbors. When we would rather walk around people in need and avoid situations that trouble us, soften our hearts. Give us the courage to care for our neighbors and to love others as graciously as you love us. In your grace and love, we pray. Amen.

## Words of Assurance:

*In grace, we are strengthened.  
In love, our hearts are freed.  
In God, grace and love are ours.*

## Read Psalm 82

God presides in the great assembly;  
he renders judgment among the "gods":

<sup>2</sup> "How long will you<sup>[a]</sup> defend the unjust  
and show partiality to the wicked?"<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Defend the weak and the fatherless;

- uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
- <sup>4</sup> Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.
- <sup>5</sup> “The ‘gods’ know nothing, they understand nothing.  
They walk about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- <sup>6</sup> “I said, ‘You are “gods”;  
you are all sons of the Most High.’
- <sup>7</sup> But you will die like mere mortals;  
you will fall like every other ruler.”
- <sup>8</sup> Rise up, O God, judge the earth,  
for all the nations are your inheritance.

### Prayers of the People:

*Lord, how are we ever going to be your disciples? We are overwhelmed by the needs of the world. The cries of people who feel threatened by others, those who are in need, those who are in danger, those who are alienated, ring in our ears and in our hearts. Sometimes we would just like to run and hide, hoping that all this turmoil will go away. But it doesn't. It sits outside our doors and waits for us to do something. Lord, help that “Something” be service and compassion. Help us to remember how you have forgiven and blessed each one of us, how you have called us blessed and beloved. You remind us in today's scripture of the compassion a Samaritan had on one who was injured. We like that story, but now is the time for us to take that story to heart. We are called to reach beyond our comfort zone, to those in need, to the alien, the injured, the lost, the lonely. It is difficult for us to do and we need to feel your powerful presence with us. Bless us again, O Lord, with a good measure of courage and strength that we may truly serve you. Bless those whose names and situations we have brought before you today for healing and hope. In your mercy and love, help us to reach out to others as you have reached out to us. For we ask these things 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: Amos 7:7-17

This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb,<sup>[a]</sup> with a plumb line<sup>[b]</sup> in his hand. <sup>8</sup> And the Lord asked me, “What do you see, Amos?”

“A plumb line,” I replied.

Then the Lord said, “Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.”<sup>9</sup> “The high places of Isaac will be destroyed

and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined;

with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam.”

<sup>10</sup> Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel:

“Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. <sup>11</sup> For this is what Amos is saying:

“Jeroboam will die by the sword,  
and Israel will surely go into exile,  
away from their native land.”

<sup>12</sup> Then Amaziah said to Amos, “Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah.

Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. <sup>13</sup> Don’t prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king’s sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom.”

<sup>14</sup> Amos answered Amaziah, “I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. <sup>15</sup> But the Lord took me from tending the flock and said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ <sup>16</sup> Now then, hear the word of the Lord. You say,

“Do not prophesy against Israel,  
and stop preaching against the descendants of Isaac.’

<sup>17</sup> “Therefore this is what the Lord says:

“Your wife will become a prostitute in the city,  
and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword.

Your land will be measured and divided up,  
and you yourself will die in a pagan<sup>[c]</sup> country.

And Israel will surely go into exile,  
away from their native land.”

## Read the Epistle Lesson: Colossians 1:1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

<sup>2</sup> To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters<sup>[a]</sup> in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, <sup>4</sup> because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have

for all God's people—<sup>5</sup> the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel<sup>6</sup> that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace.<sup>7</sup> You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,<sup>[e]</sup> who is a faithful minister of Christ on our<sup>[d]</sup> behalf,<sup>8</sup> and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

<sup>9</sup> For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,<sup>[e]</sup><sup>10</sup> so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,<sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,<sup>12</sup> and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you<sup>[f]</sup> to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.<sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

<sup>26</sup> “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

<sup>27</sup> He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’<sup>[a]</sup>; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>[b]</sup>”

<sup>28</sup> “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

<sup>29</sup> But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

<sup>30</sup> In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead.<sup>31</sup> A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.<sup>32</sup> So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.<sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.<sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.<sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii<sup>[c]</sup> and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

<sup>36</sup> “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

<sup>37</sup> The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

## Message

Our Gospel today starts with a Pharisee, a lawyer asking Jesus, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” This man who spent his life studying the Old Testament, to him, Jesus was cheapening the Law, the Torah, making it into nothing. In his eyes, all the wrong people were coming to the gates of heaven: tax collectors, prostitutes, poor people, and other no-good low-lives. This Jesus was welcoming them with arms open wide! He forgave their sins and sat down to dine with them. Jesus was doing all this because they saw their sins, were anguishing over them, and sought His mercy! So, to see if Jesus was a ‘real’ rabbi, whether Jesus really understood the Torah, the lawyer asks him a question. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?”

But Jesus responded: “You’re the expert. You tell me.” The lawyer knew the Law and so he stated the bottom-line: “Love God with your whole being, and love your neighbor as yourself.” He answered properly, for that is what the Law says you must do if you are going to receive eternal life. Jesus says, “Yes, do that and you will live. Do that and you will have eternal life.” Such is the Law. It can only demand. Do this; if you do, you will live; if you don’t, you will die, even in eternity. There is no gray area, it is all or nothing. One mess up at anytime and anywhere and you have fully failed: no excuses, no hope.

The Pharisee looks for a loophole to give him hope where none existed. He knows that he has failed the Law demands just like you or I have. Therefore, he is not soaring toward light and life, but towards death and no hope. He is not heading to eternal life. But in the lawyer’s own eyes, he is a good person, and by worldly standards he is. But God’s eyes see differently. Our eyes may say, “Good enough.” God’s eyes see things as they really are when compared to true holiness. God sees our full corruption and complete failure!

The lawyer did not truly understand the Scriptures. He saw the Word of God as life’s instruction manual. He saw the Bible, in his case the Torah, as an owner’s manual for living a good life. In truth: the Scriptures do teach the Christian what a godly life is, but that is not why God unmasked His written Word to us. God made known the written Word to bring us Christ, both in the Old Testament and the New. For the Old Testament and Jesus teach the same truth: justification by faith,

that salvation is all God's doing. It is woven into the words of the Old Testament. Moses wrote that Abraham "believed the LORD, and God counted it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Such salvation is also found in the New Testament. God is the God who forgives. He is the One who covers His people's sin and gives them eternal life.

The Pharisee, as most of the Jews in Jesus' day, and even some Christians, had twisted and mutilated God's written Word into a book that told them what to do to get a reward. Yes, God may get you into heaven, but there is more! This is what you have to do to make Him smile on you and get rewarded. The lawyer needed a loophole because his own answer had condemned him. If you want to do something to inherit eternal life, you must live a perfect life of love, for God and neighbor. No slip ups and no failures. The Law cuts no deals. Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan. We know the story. A man fell victim to robbers. They left him stripped, bleeding, in pain, and dying. A Priest walks by. A Levite walks by. Then a Samaritan, who is someone considered as a second-class person at best, he does not walk by. He stops. The Samaritan pours oil and wine, the medical treatment of his day, on the man's wounds. He cleans his bruises, cuts, and sores. He picks him up and puts him on his own animal. He takes him to an inn and hands him over to the steward. The Good Samaritan takes care of all the man's needs. He nurses him to health and clothes his fallen nakedness. He brings him food to eat and wine to drink. And as the Good Samaritan leaves, he gives to the steward of the house his riches. He then tells him to spend it and more if needed on the man.

Jesus asks the lawyer: "So, who was a neighbor to the man who fell among thieves?" Very quietly the lawyer answers: "The one who showed mercy." The lawyer could not even say, "The Samaritan." Jesus had driven him to confess the true purpose of God's Law: to unmask the need for mercy. There is no doubt: We are the ones whom thieves have beaten and robbed. Satan and the world have left us bleeding and bruised, robbing us of the beautiful Image of God. Left us for dead in the dust from which we had been taken. And the Law of God, shown by the Priest and the Levite, is no help. The Priest and the Levite stride right past without giving or without even offering to give any help. The Law says they cannot help. The Law has them striding by. The Law can only kill, the Law can only make you aware of your sins.

So, to answer the lawyer's question, there is nothing he can do, nothing any of us can do, to inherit eternal life. We are the ones lying in the ditch. Yet God saw each of us in our misery, and He was not content to walk on by. For at the core of God is mercy, compassion, and love. Our Good Samaritan did not randomly come down the road. The love of God the Father sent Him to us. Yes, Jesus, God in the flesh, is

our Good Samaritan. For He comes to rescue us, we who are helpless. We who have sinned! Jesus is the purest form of holy living, the sanctified, sinless life that only Christ could live. Yes, the Good Samaritan is Jesus Christ. In mercy, Jesus came to heal us. Mercy led Him to take on our flesh, to go to the cross of death, forgiving our sin, forgiving your sin, all of this to give us eternal life!

Yes, Jesus, the Good Samaritan, has compassion for each of us. He stooped down, soiling His hands to pick us up. The Good Samaritan brings us to the inn of the Church, where others may look to our eternal needs. That is why we come to Church, we are called to unite in God through the water and Word of holy Baptism. Here is where we are fed, His Body and given the cup of salvation, His Blood in holy communion. Here is where we can repent of our sins, where we hear of real forgiveness for our real sins. Here is where we hear proclaimed the total of God's Word: The Old Testament being the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament being the Old Testament revealed.

The great news is that eternal life is not for only after we die, but it is here for us, now. For life everlasting is the life of mercy that flows from the Triune God. It is the life of Christ, given to us through the Holy Spirit, which we live out in faith toward Heavenly Father and fervent love toward one another! For Jesus invites us all to taste and live such life with Him. We do not have to wait for heaven to begin tasting eternal life! It is ours today as we experience it through the eyes of faith. And when Jesus shows you mercy and you hear Him say, "Go and do the same," He is saying, "Come and live my love!" For our rules cannot contain the boundaries of Christian love. So, we are to live lives of love, and all this takes place where God has placed us, right here, where we are to "let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

Jesus is the Good Samaritan. He brings us to the inn of the Church, where we as a church family look to each other's eternal needs. As Jesus, through His Spirit, pours out more Life for us and into us than we can contain, may we pour out of ourselves for others. For from God's unending sea of overflowing love, we pour out such love toward our neighbor. It is what Christians do; it is who we are. How can we live any other way? For we love because He first loved us. Children of God, Christ has forgiven our sins and set us free. Go forth in your freedom to live a life of love. Amen.

Benediction:

*In grace, we are strengthened.  
In love, our hearts are freed.  
In God, grace and love are ours.*