

WORSHIP DEVOTIONAL

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Fresno, CA

August 16, 2020

Eleventh Sunday of Pentecost

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

You may make the sign of the cross; the sign marked at baptism.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

Amen.

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.
We place our hope in ourselves
and rely on our own efforts.
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.
We fear difference and do not welcome others
as you have welcomed us.
We sin in thought, word, and deed.
By your grace, forgive us;
through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;
so that we may live and serve you in newness of life.
Amen.**

Beloved of God,
by the radical abundance of divine mercy
we have peace with God through +Christ Jesus,



through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.
Our sins are forgiven.
Let us live now in hope.
For hope does not disappoint,
Because God's love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you.
Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and
constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus
Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 56:1

New Revised Standard Version

The Covenant Extended to All Who Obey

56 Thus says the LORD:

Maintain justice, and do what is right,
for soon my salvation will come,
and my deliverance be revealed.

Isaiah 56:6-8

⁶And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD,
to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it,
and hold fast my covenant—

⁷ these I will bring to my holy mountain,
and make them joyful in my house of prayer;
their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house shall be called a house of prayer
for all peoples.

⁸ Thus says the Lord GOD,
who gathers the outcasts of Israel,
I will gather others to them
besides those already gathered.^[a]

SECOND LESSON

Romans 11:1-2a

Israel's Rejection Is Not Final

11 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ^{2a} God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew.

Romans 11:29-32

²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now^[a] receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

GOSPEL

Matthew 15:10-28

Things That Defile

¹⁰ Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: ¹¹ it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of

the mouth that defiles.”¹² Then the disciples approached and said to him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?”¹³ He answered, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.”¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.^[a] And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.”¹⁵ But Peter said to him, “Explain this parable to us.”¹⁶ Then he said, “Are you also still without understanding?¹⁷ Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.”¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.²⁰ These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”

The Canaanite Woman’s Faith

²¹ Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”²⁴ He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.”²⁶ He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷ She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

SERMON

“EVEN JESUS NEEDED TEACHERS”

Preaching text: Matthew 15:21-28

This week Kurt, with many other kids and teachers in our community, starts “school.” Like everything else about this year, things will be different. We didn’t need to buy new clothes for his first day of school since he can be in his pajamas if he wants. His school is doing on-line learning.

There have been many stressors during this time of quarantine. For me, the most significant point of stress was probably last Spring when Kurt's school closed. The system was not prepared for such a radical shift. As a parent I felt like my head was underwater. There was so much I needed to understand about their computer systems, not to mention how I was going to keep Kurt to the rigorous schedule they suggested. I never did get it all figured out.

This Fall Kristin and I have it figured out. We are going to get a tutor to sit with Kurt as he does his on-line learning. Fortunately, we have the resources to do that. Not everyone does.

I don't think I've ever appreciated teachers more than I do now. We all need teachers. Despite all that computers and the Internet and the World Wide Web can do for us, we have found this year that no one has yet created an adequate substitute for a good teacher. Someone who cares, not only about their subject but about the people who are learning, too. Someone who can pass on, not just information, but, a passion and love for a subject. Teachers are important. That's one message I got from our gospel. Even Jesus needed teachers!

Just before our gospel for today Jesus had been followed everywhere by huge crowds. He needed to get away. He needed a vacation. When he first tried to get away, he ended up feeding 5,000 men and their families. Since then he had walked on water and healed the sick. Maybe he thought he had to leave his homeland if he really wanted to get some peace and solitude. So, he goes to the far north of Israel to a place called Tyre. It was way out of his normal range in Galilee. He hoped he could be anonymous there. But even there his fame followed him.

Imagine Jesus sitting in a small restaurant at a little table in the back. He's so tired, too tired to even sleep. He's just sitting there, maybe staring off into space. Into the restaurant comes a woman, the mother of a sick, young girl. She's not even Jewish. But she wants something from Jesus. She wants him to heal her daughter. To make her well. She says, "I'm sorry to bother you Jesus, but my daughter is tormented by a demon. I need your help."

Jesus replies, "Look, I'd like to help you but I can't. That's just the way it is. I was sent to the people of Israel, to the Jews. You don't fit. I can't help you. Please go away."

But the woman doesn't go away. She says, "Surely if you are a man of God you have come to all God's people."

Jesus answers, "Look, will you listen to me? The people of Israel are God's people. You don't take children's food and feed it to your dog, do you?"

"Right," she replies, "but even the dogs on the street get to eat the scraps off the table. Jesus, your God must have a little love to give even those of us who aren't Jewish."

I imagine Jesus recoiling at that. Maybe covering his face to ease a headache. Maybe he thought about all the people before him who had faced similar circumstances with foreigners. There was Jonah, who had to bring God's message to the despised people of Nineveh. Or Father Abraham who had to bargain for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. There had been Rahab the prostitute who helped spies sent by Joshua. Or maybe he remembered Ruth, a foreigner who became an ancestor of King David.

I wonder if it popped into his mind what happened in his own life with foreigners. Maybe he remembered stories his mother had told him about his own infancy. When strange foreigners called Magi brought him gifts.

"You are right," Jesus replies just above a whisper. "Of course, you are right. You are also very brave. Go home, your daughter has been made well."

That's how I imagine that story unfolding. But it is only one way of interpreting it. Scholars say this story is so difficult to understand because it casts Jesus in such an unfavorable light. It's almost certainly a true story because no follower of Jesus in the 1st century would make up a story like this. It shows a side of Jesus that is difficult to see. First, we don't like to think of Jesus being angry. We might struggle with anger ourselves.

But there are other parts that might bother us. Why was Jesus so being so harsh? Some people say he was testing her. Or gently teasing her. But still, Jesus is calling some people "children" and some people "dogs."

One way we might think about this is with the race to find the Coronavirus vaccination. Whichever nation that develops it will face some important questions: Who gets it first? Do we make it available to the rest of the world? Do we intentionally exclude anyone? You can bet that it will matter what people you are a part of when that vaccination gets developed.

I tend to read the Bible for what's there. Here I see a Jesus who was a true son of his people, with all the narrow nationalism that implies. We are seeing Jesus' very human side. He is determining his mission in terms of his own people. But most importantly, this is a Jesus who can be surprised and taught. This happened from time to time with Gentiles and especially with women. Jesus would say things like, "Truly I tell you, I have not seen such faith in Israel" (Matthew 8:10) Jesus could be surprised by the doubt of the Jews and surprised by the faith of Gentiles. Even Jesus, from time to time, needed others to help stretch and refine his clear sense of what God wanted him to do. Even Jesus needed teachers.

And if Jesus needed teachers you can bet; we need them too. Jesus' best teachers were the men and women, boys, and girls that he encountered day by day. That may be where we find our best teachers too. We need teachers to expand our vision, to open our eyes when they get too narrowly focused. We need teachers to show us where the risks and the possibilities are.

This year has shown us how crucial teachers are. It is important to be open-minded enough to be teachable. Even Jesus needed teachers! If we think we already have all the answers we aren't very teachable. My prayer is that we will always be open to the teachers God sends our way!

AMEN.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.



Heavenly Father, the key word in today's lessons is "all." As in Saint Paul's statement in Romans, *"For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all."* Every being born of humankind is born in sin; that is human nature; all have sinned. And the Lord God, through Jesus Christ came to redeem everyone. Yes, He came to the Israelites first; they were the people chosen to reveal the God of heaven to humans on earth. But, ultimately, He came to all people. Thank you. **Lord, in your mercy...**

The Church of Jesus Christ lives, not in the Covenant of the Law, but in the Covenant of Grace, by the Blood of Jesus. He died for all. Lord, gather people everywhere into your kingdom that, as Isaiah says, *"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples."* **Lord, in your mercy...**

We pray for our nation, state and city, our president, governor, mayor, and the leaders of the world. It is this hurting world that Jesus came to save. Renew the minds and hearts of those who govern that they may work together to make our world a better place. Relieve the suffering of those who struggle under the load of illness, economic deprivation, human strife and the painful results of sinful thoughts and actions. The Canaanite woman in today's Gospel lesson was not entitled to God's mercy under the law. But Jesus saw into her heart and said, *"Woman, great is your faith."* Jesus sees into our hearts, too. Does He see faith? Lord, increase our faith and trust in you. **Lord, in your mercy...**

Remember this congregation, its pastor, and people, that we may share the love and mercy of Jesus. Touch those who have asked for healing, comfort, and renewal in the Holy Spirit. We lift to you in our hearts, people who need your strength and power. **Lord, in your mercy...**

Isaiah declared, *"Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance be revealed."* Lord, make us ready, in Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen**

CAROLYN LINN

HAVE YOU TALKED TO GOD TODAY?

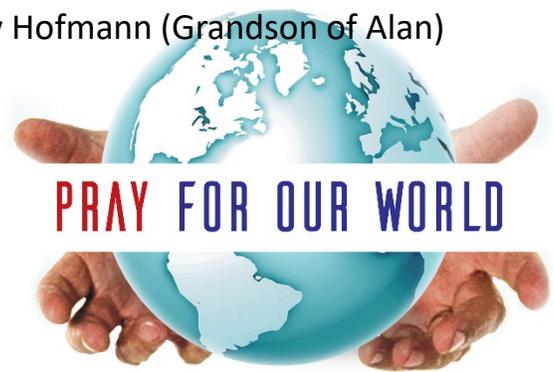
PRAYER CONCERNS

Members in Need of Prayer:

Karla Sutton
Gloria Miller
David Adamcik
Mary & Patrick Norris and
Children Alex, Isaac, and Michelle
Paul Werfelmann
Juana & Anthony On &
Extended Family
Richard & Kay Schumacher
Karen Kubar
Irene Pierini
Jocelyn Miller
Arlene Robbins
Kirsten Linder
Stacy Lairson
Jim Thompson
Addie Dornbusch
Neil & Verna Walden
Karl & Pauline Ritterbush
Chris Dueker
Connie Alvarado
Susan Berg
Margie Kinler
Prayers of Thanksgiving for the life of Helen
Stewart who has entered the Church
Triumphant. Please pray for her family and
Friends for peace and comfort.

Family and Friends:

Phil Chavez
Linda Franklin
Candice Frost (Margie Kinler's Grand-
daughter) & her friend Sharon Ferris
Mickey Paulo
Janet Sharp
Barbara Lester
Kelley Kim
Jade Dixon
Craig Cefre (Autumn's boyfriend's Dad)
Anthony Chollicho
David (Sandy's Daughter's Husband)
Kim Carlson
Denise Maxwell (The Wilk's sister-in-law)
John Sharpe
Melissa Melton
Kim Boren & Family
Kathy Edison
Judie Meadows
Joan Rollin
Margie Poole
Sandy Robbins
Kathy Christiansen
Arlynn Turnquist
Amy Conley
Mike D
Michael Horne
Dee Dee Mello
Betty Synder
Alexi Arstein
Bonnie Holsonbake
Trey Hofmann (Grandson of Alan)



The 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,

For ever and ever.

Amen

Matthew 6:9-13

ORDINARY TIMES

Extraordinary God



To him be the
glory forever!

ROMANS 11:36, NIV

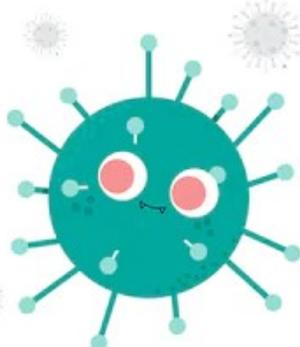
Kathy has included a page for taking notes while you go through the Worship Devotional and a page to color. It has been found that coloring reduces stress and calms a person.



This is an
unprecedented time.
It's time for
unprecedented
kindness.

inspire 
kindness®

Stay Home



Stay Safe



STAY IN PEACE! SERVE THE LORD! WASH YOUR HANDS! THANKS BE TO GOD!

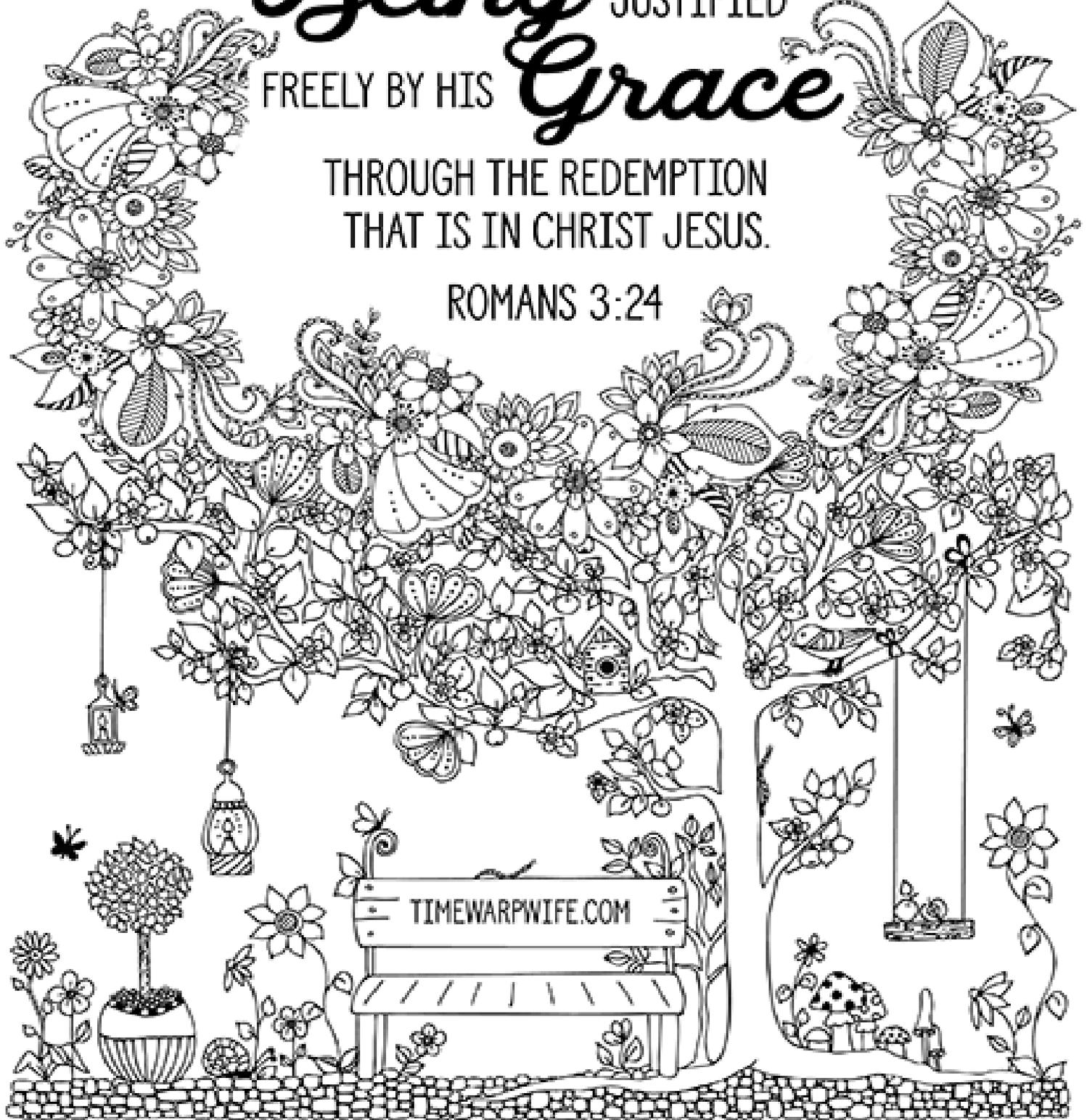
Our mission statement:

SHARING THE LOVE OF JESUS

Being JUSTIFIED
FREELY BY HIS *Grace*

THROUGH THE REDEMPTION
THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

ROMANS 3:24



[View List of Live Streams](#)