

Sunday, October 24, 2021 Worship

Welcome

Sermon | *Children are invited to come forward*

Gathering Hymn ELW # 673 God Whose Almighty Word

1 God, whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard
and took their flight:
hear us, we humbly pray,
and where the gospel day
sheds not its glorious ray,
let there be light.

Text: John Marriott, 1780-1825, alt.

Confession/Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose teaching is life, whose presence is sure, and whose love is endless. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God our comforter: **like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn our faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed. Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.**

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. By the gift of grace in ☩ Christ Jesus, God makes you righteous. Receive with glad hearts the forgiveness of all your sins. **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Eternal light, **shine in our hearts. Eternal wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance. Eternal compassion, have mercy on us. Turn us to seek your face, and enable us to reflect your goodness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

First reading Jeremiah 31:7-9

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Second reading Hebrews 7:23-28

²³The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; ²⁴but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. ²⁵Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

²⁶For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever. Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel reading Mark 10:46-52

The holy gospel according to _____. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁴⁶As (Jesus) and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵²Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon II

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Quite a few years ago, back when I was in early elementary school, we had a guest speaker who was blind that came to talk to our class. He was an extremely intelligent and successful person, if memory serves me correct, I think he held several different degrees and did a bunch of legal work for different charities and social services. Yet, in spite of what a great upstanding citizen this man was, he was also sometimes mistreated because of his disability. For instance, he described how when he voted in elections that unfortunately there weren't always Braille ballots available at the polling place for him use. So when that happened he'd have to go into a room with an employee at the polling station who was supposed to read the ballot out loud to him and he'd tell them his choices they were supposed to fill in those choices for him. As if the thought of having to tell a total stranger your voting selections and not even know if they're filling them in the way you want wasn't daunting enough, he also voiced how on a few occasions of having to go through this process that some of the employees even gave him push back for his voting choices and that one even told him that they refused to mark down a particular vote of his. In addition to that there's also lots of difficulties that being blind poses to everyday living that he and others go through. At VBS last summer we had the kids do some activities that simulated what it's like for people with different disabilities, and one of them was we gave the kids sunglasses that had Chapstick smeared all over the lenses which blurred their vision entirely and then we had them try to run through the playground with those glasses on. And the whole thing was quite literally eye-opening to just how a lack of sight makes doing even simple thing so much harder.

As many difficulties as this man and others who are blind may face today, people who were blind during the time of Jesus's earthly ministry faced even greater challenges and were truly some of the most vulnerable people in the world. There was no social services or public safety programs in place back then and there also weren't any of the technological advances that we have today to assist the blind. This basically created a situation where the blind couldn't earn a living or support themselves at all, so most of them had to resort to begging for money and food. That was the situation that Bartimaeus lived under in our gospel story. In fact, in this story Bartimaeus isn't even referred to by his actual name and instead is simply called "the blind man", showing that many didn't even believe that he had enough dignity to be named. Yet, when Jesus walks by, Bartimaeus cries out to him addressing him. Many others in the crowd tried to silence him though, telling him to be quiet and get back in his place, just as some tried to silence that blind man who visited our school or how others historically who've spoken out against injustice have been told to get back in their place. Yet, Bartimaeus won't stay silent in the face of the injustices that he others were facing and cries out once more "Jesus Son of David, have mercy on me" and Jesus hears him and actually takes the time to go over and ask him "What do you want me to do for you?" I'm sure that almost no one had ever asked Bartimaeus that question before or even noticed him as Jesus did. At his request, Jesus restores Bartimaeus's sight, this miracle would have provided him with healing in many ways. Obviously, having his vision would make everyday living so much easier. However, he also would have had so many of the social opportunities he hadn't had before and would no longer be known as just this worthless blind beggar by so many of those around him. But I think that perhaps the greatest healing Bartimaeus received in this story was the fact that after years of being overlooked and ignored, Jesus actually listened to him and treated him with the dignity and respect he deserved. And at the very end of this story out this whole crowd of people that was there, Bartimaeus ends up being the one to become a follower of Jesus.

Friends in Christ, God creates a place for the most vulnerable and oppressed, just like Jesus did for Bartimaeus. I got a glimpse of that last week when our confirmation class went down to help at the Benevolent Society. The director of operations down there shared with us some stories of some of the people they've helped over the years, one of them was a family that had two young girls who were living in food insecurity. She said that when she gave this family their bags of food, that the girls were just so excited to find cereal in there because they hadn't ever gotten cereal before. It almost sounded like the excitement and joy children have on Christmas morning when they open up their presents and find something they've always wanted but haven't had before, only in this instance that item was cereal. She also said that she's been amazed over the years by how much power there is just in the act of listening to people's struggles. As I listened to her stories it reminded me of Jesus listening to Bartimaeus and asking him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' Because God is always moving toward care and justice for the blind, the beggars, and anyone else suffering from afflictions. That's God's work among us. So now may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord, amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 639 When We Are Living (not available for download)

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he

descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Set free from sin and death and nourished by the word of truth, we join in prayer for all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Risen One, we give you thanks for congregations and ministries throughout the world that serve as centers of prayer and action. Empower missionaries, teachers, healers, evangelists, and all who are sent to share your song of joy. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Holy One, we give you thanks for generous land that produces abundant harvests. Strengthen and protect all soils, from rooftop gardens to prairie farmlands, to patio planters to fertile valleys, and bless all who lovingly tend them. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Ruling One, we give you thanks for leaders of nations who work to build up the common good. Strengthen efforts of reconciliation among all nations (*especially*), that peace extends in every direction. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Healing One, we give you thanks for all who labor for the health of others. Comfort and strengthen all who struggle with chronic pain. Send healing and relief to all who are sick (*especially*). Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Providing One, we give you thanks for all who provide for others. Inspire generosity in your people, so that we carry out the work of making disciples of all nations. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Living One, we give you thanks for the saints who have increased our faith. Give us courage to follow in hope until you gather us all around your table of abundance. Let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Confident that you hear us, O God, we boldly place our prayers into your hands; through Jesus Christ, our truth and life. **Amen.**

Announcements/Noisy Offering

Offering Prayer *You may hold out your offering.*

Ever present God, **with this offering we present also ourselves, all that we have been, all that we are, all that we shall become, and our resolve to walk in your way. Accept us and our offering, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you!**

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

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.

Meal of Holy Communion

Prayer after Communion

Lord of life, **in the gift of your body and blood you turn the crumbs of our faith into a feast of salvation. Send us forth into the world with shouts of joy, bearing witness to the abundance of your love in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Blessing

Mothering God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

Sending hymn ACS # 1084 God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me

1 God, be the love to search and keep me;
 God, be the prayer to move my voice;
 God, be the strength to now uphold me:

Refrain

 O Christ, surround me; O Christ, surround me.

2 Bind to myself the name of Holy,
 great cloud of witnesses enfold;
 prophets, apostles, angels witness: *Refrain*

Text: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, b. 1967

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

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