

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
*“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing
Lives”*



Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
October 23, 2022



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers

Presiding Minister

Organist

Lector

Parish Administrator

Custodian

All People

The Rev. Bradley Ross

Robin Crawford

Ted Lockmiller

Jennifer Lasher-Dobush

Vince Besednjak

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant

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Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

We may expect the religious insider to be blessed, the moral person to be right with God. But as is so often the case, Jesus' parable for today sweeps away conventional expectations. Jesus surprises the disciples and us when he says it's not the Pharisee but rather the tax collector, that morally suspect, second-class citizen, who goes home "justified," right with God (Luke 18:14). Here is a strong reminder for those of us who are church "insiders." We are also utterly dependent on God's grace and love—not merely for ourselves but for all in God's creation.

Prelude *Shall We Gather at the River* (Logan)

Welcome & Greetings

*Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, uniting us as one family in Christ, and setting us free to serve as his disciples for the sake of the world.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who is eager to forgive and who loves us beyond our days. **Amen!**

Dear friends, together let us acknowledge
the times when we have not loved this world as Jesus does.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
we confess our shortcomings to you and to one another.
We have harmed your good creation.
We have failed to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.
Turn us in a new direction.
Show us the path that leads to new life.
Be our refuge and strength on the journey,
through Jesus Christ, our redeemer and friend.
Amen.

Beloved of God: your sins are forgiven ✠
and you are made whole.
God points the way to new life in Jesus Christ,
who meets us on the road.
Journey now in God's abiding love
through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen!

*Gathering Hymn *There is a Wideness in God's Mercy*

ELW #588

*Greeting

The grace of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you.**

*Canticle of Praise *This is the Feast*

ELW pg. 101

*Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, daily your mercy surprises us with everlasting forgiveness. Strengthen our hope in you, and grant that all the peoples of the earth may find joy and wholeness in you, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22

In a time of drought, the people pray for mercy, repenting of their sins and the sins of their ancestors. They appeal to God to remember the covenant, to show forth God's power, and to heal their land by sending life-giving rain.

⁷Although our iniquities testify against us,
act, O LORD, for your name's sake;
our apostasies indeed are many,
and we have sinned against you.
⁸O hope of Israel,
its savior in time of trouble,
why should you be like a stranger in the land,
like a traveler turning aside for the night?

⁹Why should you be like someone confused,
like a mighty warrior who cannot give help?
Yet you, O LORD, are in the midst of us,
and we are called by your name;
do not forsake us!

¹⁰Thus says the LORD concerning this people:
Truly they have loved to wander,
they have not restrained their feet;
therefore the LORD does not accept them,
now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.

¹⁹Have you completely rejected Judah?
Does your heart loathe Zion?
Why have you struck us down
so that there is no healing for us?
We look for peace, but find no good;
for a time of healing, but there is terror instead.

²⁰We acknowledge our wickedness, O LORD,
the iniquity of our ancestors,
for we have sinned against you.

²¹Do not spurn us, for your name's sake;
do not dishonor your glorious throne;
remember and do not break your covenant with us.

²²Can any idols of the nations bring rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
Is it not you, O LORD our God?
We set our hope on you,
for it is you who do all this.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

The bold verses are sung by the congregation using the tone below:



Antiphon: *Happy are the people whose strength is in you.* (Ps. 84:5)

¹How dear to me [|] is your dwelling,
O [|] LORD of hosts!

²**My soul has a desire and longing for the courts [|] of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the [|] living God.**

³Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest where she may [|] lay her young,

by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my king [|] and my God.

⁴**Happy are they who dwell [|] in your house!
They will always be [|] praising you.** *Antiphon*

⁵Happy are the people whose strength [|] is in you,
whose hearts are set on the [|] pilgrims' way.

⁶**Those who go through the balsam valley will find it a [|] place of springs,
for the early rains have covered it with [|] pools of water.**

⁷They will climb from [|] height to height,
and the God of gods will be [|] seen in Zion. *Antiphon*

Second Lesson

2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18

The conclusion of this letter to a young minister offers a final perspective on life from one who faced death. Though others let him down, Paul was sure of his faith in the Lord, who stood by him and lent him strength.

⁶As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

⁸From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

¹⁶At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! ¹⁷But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. ¹⁸The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

*Gospel Acclamation



*Gospel

Luke 18:9-14

The coming reign of God will involve unexpected reversals of fortune with judgment rooted in mercy. Jesus tells a parable in which the one who humbles himself is exalted and the one who exalts his own righteousness is humbled.

The Gospel according to Luke, 18th chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord!

⁹[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!
Sermon

Praise to you, O Christ!

Hymn of the Day *Love Has Brought Us Here Together*

ACS #1040



1 Love has brought us here to - geth - er; love of fam - 'ly,
2 Love is gen - tle, love is pa - tient, soft in words and
3 Love does not re - joice at e - vil; love re - joic - es



love of friends; love, our vow till death should part us; love, God's
kind in deeds. Love is strong and nev - er pom - pous; love puts
in the right. Keen in giv - ing and for - giv - ing, spread - ing



gift, that nev - er ends. From our birth, through-out our life - time,
first the oth - er's needs. Not quick-tem - pered or re - sent - ful,
love is love's de - light. When two peo - ple pledge their u - nion,



love's in - sis - tence calls our name. Floods of wa - ters
prone to take of - fense or brood, love ex - cels in
all who wit - ness are re - newed, feast - ing at love's



can - not drown it or put out its danc - ing flame.
grace and mer - cy, nev - er jeal - ous, nev - er rude.
earth - ly ban - quet, tast - ing heav'n's be - at - i - tude.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

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*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

In gratitude and humility, let us join together in prayer on behalf of all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

God of mercy, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your name. Inspire your whole church, including our Covenant family, to serve and love all people with the unceasing grace you extend to us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, you formed a world where even the sparrow finds a home. Preserve the beauty and diversity of all creatures with whom we share the earth. Lead us to protect all living things. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of peace, you are an ever-present help in time of trouble. Rescue families and nations torn apart by violence and warfare. Unite all people toward common goals of reconciliation and peace for every person. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of hope, you stand with the suffering and give strength. Comfort your people filled with fear or anger, anxiety or shame. Bring healing to all who are sick in body, mind, or spirit. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of restoration, you call us to trust in you and not ourselves alone. Continue to shape Covenant into a community of humility and repentance, ready to encounter you in love and follow in your ways. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

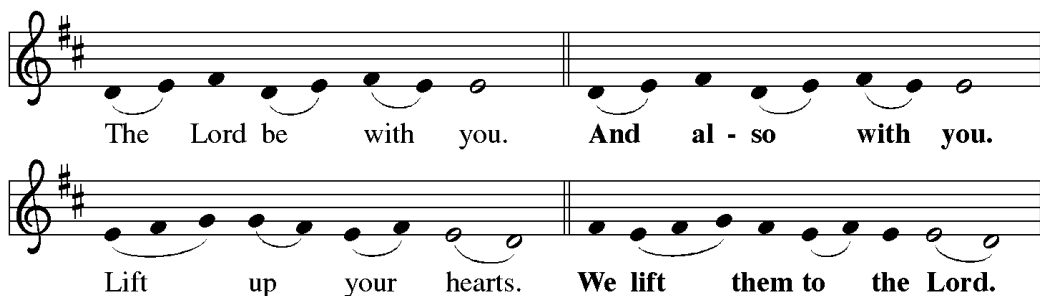
God of eternal life, to you be the glory forever. We give you thanks for all who have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and now live with you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

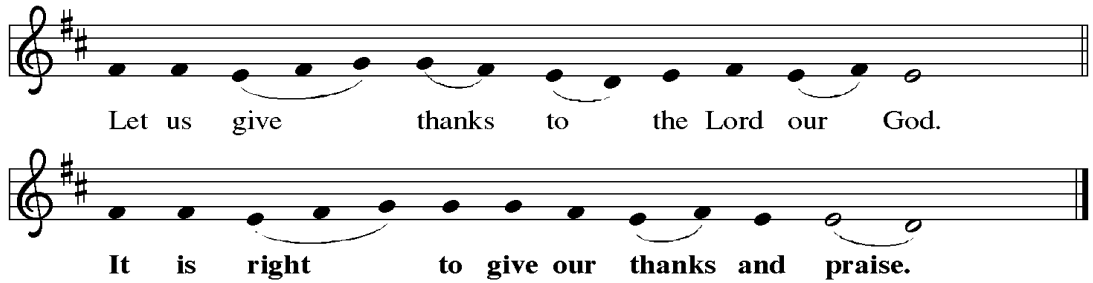
With grateful hearts we commend our spoken and silent prayers to you, O God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen!**

*Sharing of the Peace

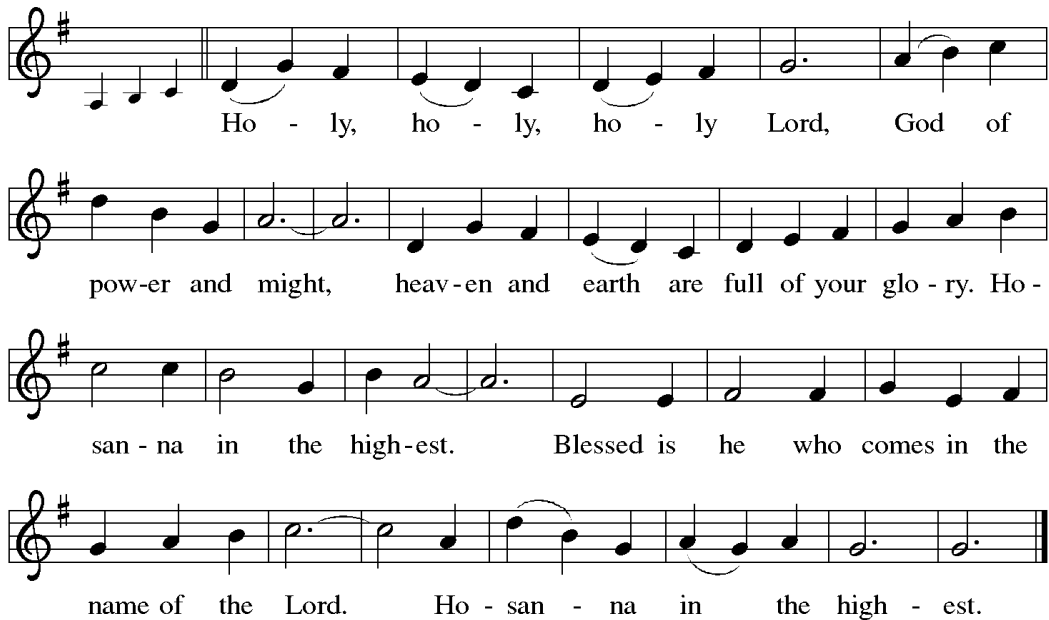
The peace of the Risen Christ be with you always!
And also with you.

*Great Thanksgiving





It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God,
our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food,
you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.

You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life,
and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven.
You sent your Son to eat with sinners
and to become food for the world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his life given for us
and his rising from the grave,
we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.

Holy Spirit, nurture and sustain us with this meal:
strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want,
and by this bread and cup make of us the body of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever.

Amen!

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

*Invitation to Communion

Christ invites you to this table of grace.
Taste and see that the Lord is good!
Thanks be to God!

Communion

Music Interlude *Lord, Revive Us* (Ritter)

*Prayer after Communion

God of the abundant table,
you have refreshed our hearts in this meal
with bread for the journey.
Give us your grace on the road
that we might serve our neighbors with joy;
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen!

***Blessing**

God, who gives life to all and frees us from despair,
bless you with truth and peace.

And may the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
guide you always in faith, hope, and love.

Amen!

***Sending Hymn** *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*

ELW #536

***Dismissal**

Go in peace with Christ always beside you!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him* (Blake)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Sheena Cameron, Joan Clarke, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Clare Hanusz, Alex Hohenstein, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Debbie Morris, Phyllis Nemeth, Steve Senderak, Gary Smith, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Maud Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family.

General Fund receipts for week ending 10/16/22022: \$602

**FREE
community
MEAL**

Our next FREE community meal is this
Thursday, October 27 (5-6pm) downstairs
in our fellowship hall. Have a seat and we
will serve you! Help us spread the word!



We are delighted that 2022 marks 75 years of ministry as a Covenant family! And so, we will boldly celebrate on Reformation Sunday (next Sunday, October 30) with worship in the sanctuary at 9am (pre-service music starting at approximately 8:30am) and a catered brunch following the worship in our fellowship hall. Bishop Emeritus Abraham Allende will preach, and we will also have our ecumenical handbell choir and the Wolf Creek brass quintet join us to make the day all the more special as we give thanks to God for the honor to be part of this wonderful body of Christ. We hope to see you here!

Lectionary Blog: Exalting and Humbling



A recurring theme in Luke, and indeed in much of Scripture, is the lowering of the proud and the raising up of the meek. Mary's Magnificat and the parable of Lazarus and the rich man have already brought us this theme. This week, the lectionary texts bring us a couple more examples of humans who exalt themselves and those who humble themselves.

Jesus noticed that some people around him trusted in themselves and viewed others with contempt (Luke 18:9). Sadly, this is a common phenomenon in the church. Frequently, Christian leaders of all kinds, denominations and political persuasions can fall into the trap of thinking that they have everything figured out, and they disdain others who aren't as wise or enlightened. This posture and high opinion of self is literally anti-Christ.

Jesus told a story of two men who walked into the temple. The Pharisee thanked God that he wasn't rapacious, a practitioner of injustice, a sex criminal or a collaborator with the empire. He fasted and paid tithes on everything he owned, which were given to the temple and to the landless poor (11-12). This sounds like a good guy to my progressive mind. He wasn't greedy or violent, and he practiced economic justice. But he knew he was doing everything right and was proud of himself. Meanwhile, the tax collector, a collaborator with the forces of the empire, stood far off, not looking toward heaven. He hit his chest and begged God to have mercy on him, a sinner.

Jesus said the latter man went home justified, not the first. How can this be?

The Pharisee did everything right, devoted himself to justice, and resisted violence and the empire. The tax collector certainly didn't lie when he called himself a sinner. Yet, Jesus says those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Despite doing everything right, the Pharisee in Jesus' parable trusted in himself and viewed others with contempt. This is simply not allowed for the people of Jesus. We don't get to think this way. If a minister or other church leader is reading this and feeling convicted of viewing with contempt those whom God has entrusted you to serve, please seek out your spiritual adviser and talk this through, for your sake as well as that of your people. The tax collector saw the truth: he was a sinner in need of mercy, as we all are.

The poetry in Jeremiah provides an excellent example of communal lament and request for God to return to help a humbled people. Interestingly, it seems that God provided this language as an example to a people who were too stubborn and self-reliant to listen, as God spelled out what proper repentance might sound like. God longed for the people of Judah to confess that their wrongdoings testified against them, their apostacies were many and that they sinned against God (Jeremiah 14:7). The people should have longed for God to dwell with them permanently, and not just be like a stranger passing through town (8).

God gave Jeremiah the pattern for what the people should have said to God. Instead, they loved to wander from God's call to humble themselves (10) and listened to false prophets who promised peace and prosperity instead of punishment for the people's arrogance (13-14). Eventually, the people learned to confess their wrongdoing (19-22)—but it seems it was too little, too late.

Those who exalt themselves will be humbled. That is exactly what has happened to every kingdom on the face of the earth so far. The ancient Egyptians, Romans and all other empires waned in power eventually. The kingdom of heaven calls humans to a different kind of posture. Instead of standing proudly, looking around at all those who don't measure up to us in power, wisdom or even in the pursuit of justice, Jesus points to the one who acknowledges that he is a sinner and doesn't know how to free himself. Only through the humble admission that we are lost and cannot save ourselves will Jesus justify us.

Even in our justification, we remain always sinner and saint, perpetually in need of Jesus, and never able to trust in ourselves or view others with contempt.

This Lectionary Blog, and other resources for the journey of faith, are available on LivingLutheran.org.

*Cory Driver is the assistant to the bishop for emerging ministers and ministries for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

From our worship resource *Sundays & Seasons*:

God Be Merciful

We may expect the religious insider to be blessed, the moral person to be right with God. But as is so often the case, Jesus' parable for today sweeps away conventional expectations. Jesus surprises the disciples and us when he says it's not the Pharisee but rather the tax collector, that morally suspect, second-class citizen, who goes home "justified," right with God (Luke 18:14). Here is a strong reminder for those of us who are church "insiders." We also fall short and need God's grace, utterly dependent on God's love—not merely for ourselves but for all in God's creation.

Theological Reflection, Illustration

Among those who have undertaken a spiritual pilgrimage, benefits are tangible—perhaps Instagrammed—and, often, rapturous. When the psalmist identifies the hearts of the faithful as being “set on the pilgrims’ way” (84:5), hearers learn that personal, daily praise is a pilgrimage too. “Faith is not the clinging to a shrine but an endless pilgrimage of the heart,” writes Abraham Heschel. “Audacious longing, burning songs, daring thoughts . . . these are all a drive towards serving [God] who rings our hearts like a bell” (*Man Is Not Alone: A Philosophy of Religion* [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976], p. 174).

Connections with Creation

The psalmist imagines a temple of God where “even the sparrow finds a home” (Ps. 84:3). It’s a small detail in a poem exalting the faithful who long for God’s house, and yet this detail makes all the difference. The zeal for God’s house isn’t so single-minded that it loses sight of the lives of others. Indeed, it makes space for the flourishing of other creatures, even the humble sparrow. The boasts of the Pharisee in the gospel reading leave no room for others—his prayer cuts himself off from them: “I thank you that I am not like other people” (Luke 18:11). By contrast, the tax collector’s repentance brings him into community with all of creation sustained by God’s mercy—the sparrow and everything else. In the sacraments of baptism and communion, God makes space for us and for all creation to find a home and to return our thanks in prayer and praise.

Comments from the Cloud of Witnesses

Why are you full of pride, because of what you have, when you ought rather to give thanks to the Giver of what you have? You did not come to know God through your own excellence; but God looked upon you out of divine goodness. You have not laid hold of Christ because of your virtue; but it is Christ who through his coming has laid hold of you.

—Basil

[Basil, in *The Sunday Sermons of the Great Fathers*, III, 362-363.]

Luke 18:9-14

Luke, writing in the late 80s and hoping to interest his Gentile audience in salvation through the Jewish messiah Jesus, stresses that the universal human need is not freedom but forgiveness, the recipients even those people who are despised by Jews, and Jesus is the Savior of all the world. By his choice of characters, Luke widens what could have been a simple parable about humility so that it proclaims God's openness to the outsider: tax collectors made their living by fraudulently over-charging the populace and were viewed by the Jews as collaborators with the enemy; Pharisees, who in their rigorous fasting abstained even from water every Monday and Thursday, are seen by the early Christians as relying on Jewish law, rather than on Christ.

Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22

The prophet Jeremiah (fl. c. 626–587 BCE) is responsible for chapters 1–25 of the book bearing his name. Throughout his lifetime, much of the Middle East suffered from war and natural disaster, and Jeremiah proclaimed that the plight of Israel and Judah was God's punishment for their apostasy. In these excerpts, Judah mourns a drought, which in this pre-scientific worldview is seen as divine punishment (vv. 1-2); the people beg for forgiveness and rain (vv. 7-9); the Lord condemns their behavior (v. 10); the dialogue between Jeremiah and God continues, until (vv. 19-22) Jeremiah, who hopes for salvation, pleads for God to forgive the people. Droughts were frequent in Palestine. The name of the deity (vv. 9, 21), which stands for God's very self, is supposed to insure the people's safety.

2 Timothy 4:4-6, 16-18

Writing probably in the late first century, the author of 2 Timothy takes Paul's voice to comment on his court hearings and to refer to his own coming martyrdom. Scholars date Paul's martyrdom during the latter part of the reign of Emperor Nero (54–68). Roman pagan practice included libations, the pouring out of wine or oil at an altar dedicated to a deity as a symbol of pouring oneself out in devotion. The winners of athletic races received a crown of laurel. The community still awaits the parousia, "his appearing." Here, "the Lord" refers to the risen Christ.

The Pharisee & The Tax Collector

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Luke 18:14b (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 18:9-14 (NIV).



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TEMPLE
JUSTIFIED
BREAST
MERCY

EXALT
HEAVEN
COLLECTOR
PRAY

TAX
PHARISEE
ROBBERS
ADULTERERS

PARABLE
RIGHTEOUS
THANK
CONFIDENT

LOOK
HUMBLE
EVILDOERS
SINNER