

September 27, 2020 + 10:30 A.M.  
Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost, Proper 21

We Join in Worship

PRELUDE

*Fanfare and Trumpet Tune on "Nettleton"*

David Lasky

**\*THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Christ's peace is with us always, no matter where we may be. And so, Christ's peace is with each and every one of us in this moment. Let us take it in. Let us really feel it. If able, please stand where you are, look around, and make signs of Christ's peace to each other.

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalms* 25)

Leader: To you, O LORD, we lift up our souls. O God, in you we trust; do not let us be put to shame; do not let our enemies exult over us.

**ALL: Make us to know your ways, O LORD; teach us your paths!**

Leader: Lead us in your truth and teach us, for you are the God of our salvation; for you we wait all day long.

**ALL: Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

Leader: Good and upright is the LORD, who instructs sinners in the way. The LORD leads the humble in what is right and teaches the humble the way.

**ALL: All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness. Let us worship the LORD!**

**INVITATION TO CONFESSION:**

Leader: In his letter to the Philippians, Paul writes, "Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." Together let us confess how we need to make our hearts and minds more Christ-like.

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (unison)

**O God, you gave water to the Israelites in the desert, and you gave us the fountain of living water in your son Jesus. We confess that we have a long way to go in following the example of this living water. We choose hardness over compassion and judgment over sympathy. We sow division instead of sewing unity. We approach others with arrogance rather than humility. We live through selfishness even though Jesus calls us to selflessness. We have forgotten that faith in Christ means choosing a life of Christ-likeness. Please forgive us. Help us to conform our hearts and minds to the heart and mind of Jesus Christ. It is in his name that we pray. Amen.**

**KYRIE** (Instrumental)

**ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! Jesus is our ever-flowing spring of forgiveness, and God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name.

**ALL: Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!**

**GLORIA PATRI:** (Instrumental)

**\*STATEMENT OF FAITH:** (From *The Confession of 1967*)

**ALL:** In Jesus of Nazareth true humanity was realized once for all. Jesus, a Palestinian Jew, lived among his own people and shared their needs, temptations, joys, and sorrows. He expressed the love of God in word and deed and became a brother to all kinds of sinful people. But his complete obedience led him into conflict with his people. His life and teaching judged their goodness, religious aspirations, and national hopes. Many rejected him and demanded his death. In giving himself freely for them he took upon himself the judgment under which all people stand convicted. God raised him from the dead, vindicating him as Messiah and Lord. The victim of sin became victor, and won the victory over sin and death for all.

<b>We Hear God's Word</b>
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**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:** (Unison)

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and your Word is proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today. Amen.

**HEBREW BIBLE LESSON:** *Exodus 17:1-7*

**EPISTLE LESSON:** *Philippians 2:1-13*

**GOSPEL LESSON:** *Matthew 21:23-32*

**SERMON:** 'Talk the Talk' or 'Walk the Walk' Jay Smith

**MEDITATION TO MUSIC** *Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy* Dale Wood

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**OFFERTORY INVITATION:**

Leader: Jesus was given authority as the voice of God on earth and used that authority to teach and enact love. Let us give our tithes and offerings so that we can effectively embody Jesus's teaching. If you are worshiping here today, you can place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are worshiping remotely, I encourage you to mail in checks or take advantage of our online giving options through the website. Now let us take a moment to reflect on stewardship.

**DOXOLOGY** (Instrumental)

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION:** (Unison)

**O God, in the fullness of his authority, Jesus taught us how to love. We dedicate these gifts to you and your great mission of love. Guide us as we use them to your purpose. We pray in the name of your son Jesus Christ, our living water. Amen.**

<b>We Go Into the World</b>
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**BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**     *Jesus Shall Reign*

Raymond H. Haan

<b>Life of the Church</b>
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**Announcements**

- **YOUTH CONNECTIONS** will meet today, September 27, immediately after the worship service. We will have a faith lesson and some other fun activities. We plan to be done by 1:00 PM. Bring your enthusiasm and a friend, and wear a mask. Meetings will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays each month, outside if possible.
- **BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE** This virtual study and discussion will be ongoing on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 PM. Look out for an email with Zoom information. If you do not have email, please call the church office for details on how to join by phone. There is not an ongoing curriculum, so you can join any week even if you haven't been there before!
- **ADULT CONNECTIONS** started this morning at 9:00 AM. Carol Callaway, John Toren and Bonnie Perryman are leading in-person for those who would like to participate. Books are provided, but you may bring your own Bible. Please wear a mask and social distance as much as possible. If you have questions, contact Carol Callaway.

**Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:**

- **BLESSING BOX** – Our Blessing Box has gained even more importance in this season of pandemic. Economic impacts are on the rise, and the most vulnerable in our midst are the most harmed. Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates on food items before donating them.

## PRAYER LIST

Anthony  
Alaina  
Marge Ashton  
Avery  
Bapst Family  
Betsy  
Brady Vanes  
Sonny Buono  
Ina Chappell  
Connor  
Dakota  
Danielle  
Dave  
George Griner  
Guy  
Gracie Helmer  
Bill Holmes  
Daniel Litwicki  
Frank  
Mary  
Family of Abelardo Lacano  
Family of Thierno Bah  
Tony Martinez  
Steve Lekan

Jessica  
Janet Orem  
Sharon Orem  
Jon Orem  
Mildred  
Jill Muller  
Jeanne Nestor  
Mary & Gary  
Rodney  
Calvin Scott  
Jay Smith  
Bonita Sutton  
Steve & Melinda  
Gary Studer  
Tarsha  
Richard Terpstra  
Dennis VanKooten  
Mattie Welch  
Cindy Waltz Family  
Laura Buono Domsic  
Susan Hanley  
McKnight Family  
Rhonda Penman  
Family of Umaru Savage  
Erin Taylor

## **Exodus 17:1-7**

**1** From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. **2** The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.” Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” **3** But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” **4** So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” **5** The Lord said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. **6** I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. **7** He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

## **Philippians 2:1-13**

**2** If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, **2** make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. **5** Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

**6** who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

**7** but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,

**8** he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

**9** Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

## **Matthew 21:23-32**

23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ 29 He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. 30 The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

## 'Talk the Talk' or 'Walk the Walk'

Jay Smith

Every time I turn on the TV lately all I hear is how my individual rights are being trampled on. I can't send my kids to school, go to sports games, go out to a restaurant, go to the theater, or spend time with friends at a party, or I must wear a mask. It's no wonder that I feel my individual rights are being trampled on. Have you seen the phrase "Don't Tread on Me" on license plates or flags? This carryover from the Revolutionary War is an expression of us not wanting to be obedient to authority figures who have abused us in the past. These abuses may be from the government, parents, employers, or any other unjust persons. But how do we judge whether or not to be obedient? As with everything else we need to turn to scripture to know who to follow.

In our Exodus reading today God is never abusive towards us but is loving and redemptive, even when we don't have faith and are questioning him. The fear that the Israelites had without water is similar to the fear we are experiencing during the pandemic. It is obvious that the people out of fear were testing God. Where is he, what is going to happen to them? Do they follow Moses, or do they follow God? Often when we are in this state of anxiety, we start to question God. It is abundantly clear that our reading shows God is always with us and leads us to our salvation.

Matthew helps us to understand and evaluate who to follow on our journey towards the heavenly kingdom of God. This section of Matthew began with Jesus cleansing the temple and cursing an unfruitful fig tree. Needless to say, the priests and elders of the temple were upset. Trying to trick Jesus, they then asked Jesus by what authority did he do these things. Jesus countered by asking the priests and elders about where the authority of John the Baptist came from. The Priests knew the people believed John was a prophet from God. So, they couldn't say from human authority or the people would be upset. Instead, they refuse to answer Jesus. Consequently, Jesus refuses to answer by what authority he is doing these things.

Jesus then admonishes the leaders for their greed and unjust actions. They spent their time on how to trick Jesus instead of trying to find the truth. It's important to understand Jesus is attacking the leaders... not all the people of Israel. Jesus does this by telling stories or parables of judgment. Remember a parable is an allegory, a story that has a hidden or symbolic meaning.

Let's listen again to this parable that Jesus told to the priest and elders.

A man had 2 sons. He went to the first and said, "Son, go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not"; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, "I will go sir", but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of the father?

The parable sets up a comparison of the two sons. One who says he will do what his father asks, but doesn't, with one who says he won't, but does. For every individual who hears this parable, the comparison helps them (actually forces them) to ask the question, Which Am I? Am I the son who presents himself as obedient while running around raising havoc, not doing as I should or am I the son to all appearances is disobedient, but in the end does what is needed? WHICH AM I? WHICH ARE YOU?

Jesus asks the priests which son did the will of the father. They said the first. That's when Jesus told the priests that the second son would go to the kingdom ahead of them.

Because the second son represents the sinners that met with John the Baptist, then repented and changed their ways. The priests were like the first son and said all the right things but didn't repent and change their actions.

Jesus' parable is in the end, a challenge for all of us. It asks us how we respond to the truth of the Gospel. Will we change our actions and follow the way Jesus shows us? Will we 'talk the talk' or 'walk the walk'?

Scripture today is so packed with truths on how to live on our journey seeking the kingdom of God. Paul sums it up for us in his letter to the Philippians. He appeals for unity in the community by always living in humility. It's clear that humility is a must ingredient in forming community unity. Also, true humility is not measured by our self-evaluation as the Pharisees did, but by the actions and concern for others as the second son did finally in Jesus' parable.

The putting together of these virtues of humility and unity raises a question for us today, since we live in a predominately individualistic society. I began my sermon with complaining about how some of my rights were being trampled on today. However, after praying over our scriptures, it is evident that those rights are only desires for my ego. I'm showing concern only for myself and not acting with humility and concern for the health of our community.

Many outstanding persons that accomplish so much in their lives put others ahead of themselves. Mother Teresa is an example of a humble woman who cared for the least in society. Martin Luther King lived by stating that "Life's most persistent and urgent question is what are you doing for others?" Mahatma Gandhi said, "the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service of others". This past week we lost an amazing woman, Ruth Bader Ginsburg. She epitomized showing concern for community while acting with humility. As RBG said, "That's what I think a meaningful life is- living not for oneself, but for one's community".

I know I need to analyze my actions and make some changes in order to follow God's path, through Jesus' teachings.

DO YOU?