

The 12th Sunday after Pentecost  
“Christ’s body of abiding brotherly love”

Luke 14:1-6  
August 31, 2025  
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost is from  
Luke 14:1-6

**“Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” 4 But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, “Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?” 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things.**

So far the text:

It was the Sabbath day when Jesus was invited to eat at the house of a Pharisee. After the worship service on the Sabbath it was not uncommon to have a meal. And on the surface, it seemed that the invitation was done with good intentions. When you receive an invitation to a meal or a party, is your first reaction to question whether the invitation is given out of love? Usually not, right?

Well, it became apparent very quickly that Jesus was not invited out of love, nor a man who had a condition called dropsy, or endema...where the body retains fluids and one experiences swelling. They watched him closely, the Pharisees, that is. For this invitation was a trap. They had no regard for the man who was ill and especially they wanted to catch Jesus doing a miracle on the Sabbath. For to work on the Sabbath would have been sinful in the eyes of the Pharisees.

On an earlier occasion in Mark 2, Jesus and His disciples **“went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”**

What was Jesus reply? **“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”**

Simply put...mercy overcomes the Law. The Sabbath was made for man to remember the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. The Sabbath pointed all to the final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross that put an end to all sacrificing of lambs on the Sabbath. For Jesus, the Lamb of God, showed great mercy by dying for all of man's failures to keep the Law! ...especially all the times that we have not loved our neighbor and shown mercy.

The Pharisees kept silent when Jesus asked them if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. Their hard unmerciful hearts made their voices silent. For they were unwilling to answer the question correctly. Yes, it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath.

So, Jesus heals the man with dropsy. And then He drives home His point by making the Pharisees think about what they would do if their donkey was in trouble. You wouldn't leave your animal in a pit on the Sabbath would you?

In Matthew 12 we hear of a similar situation where Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath with a withered hand. Jesus said these words: **“What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”**

Jesus indeed always shows mercy and does good. As our Epistle reading from Hebrews 13 tells us: **8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.**

From eternity, the Lamb of God was prepared to be our atoning sacrifice. His yesterday became our today when He was born for us, died for us and rose for us. And His mercy and love continue being given to us as we hear of His work of salvation and receive the blessings of His redeeming work in the sacraments of our baptism and the receiving of the Lord's Supper.

For Jesus intentions are always pure and His invitation is always full of love and mercy. He invites us to come to His supper to eat His body and drink His blood for our forgiveness. He gives us His boundless love so that we abide in the faith until eternity and live with love and mercy towards others.

Our epistle reading reminds us that though Jesus love is perfect and unending, we need to be reminded over and over to love as we have been loved by God.

How does our epistle reading begin? **“Let brotherly love continue.”** Brotherly love of God’s people for each other is what this verse is talking about. Adelphos love. It’s a command to not stop loving each other. For we often have lapses of mercy and love.

This verse is tied with another verse for being the shortest verse in the Bible, in the Greek that is. For it has 3 words. What’s the other verse? John 11:35. Jesus wept. In English it has two words, but again in the Greek it’s three words.

Love is often spoken about with few words. Jesus wept. He wept out of love for His dear brother Lazarus who had died. And the people said this when they saw Jesus weep. **“See how He loved him!”** And then Jesus showed His love to Lazarus and Mary and Martha by raising him from the dead.

Yes, Jesus also wept over Jerusalem for He wants all people to be saved. He gave His love to all people by dying for their sins on the cross outside the gate of Jerusalem.

As our epistle tells us: **“For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate.”**

What is our response to such great love for us? Our epistle tells us. **“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. 16 But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”**

Show brotherly love to others. Love is patient. Love is kind. God is love. Such few words describe what is love. Love comes from God and flows to His people through faith in Jesus and then is lived out with acts of mercy and humbleness in the body of Christ.

**“2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.”**

Do not forget, remember, remember, to show mercy to others for we are one body in Christ. All the commandments of the Law can be summed up in one word. It's a confirmation question that I ask after we study the 10 commandments. What is that word? Love. Love for God and love for one's neighbor.

Love for parents, for elders who have gone before us, love for the keeping of marriage honorable. Loving others by sharing with others and not being covetous. Giving to others that we know cannot repay us back.

For all the times that we have not remembered to love, Jesus did love and forgive us with His perfect love on the cross. The Good Shepherd laid down His life in love for the world. There is no greater love than this.

And so we abide in His love, live in His love and share His love with one another on the Lord's day and every day. For Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. Amen.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**