



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

August 27, 2023

Pastor James Enderle

13th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Joshua 2:8-21](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 133-134 CW

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Romans 11:13-15, 28-32](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 15:21-28](#)

The Church...is meant for all people Grace for All, Even Me

1. Some _____ gifts out of _____
2. We need to _____ in the _____
3. In order to _____
4. Don't _____ His _____ and _____

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

One of the important doctrines that we teach that it seems like a lot of Christian churches are starting to reject is the idea of original sin. To me it is a little bit striking. I think the Bible is very clear on that teaching. If you're a parent raising kids, do you have to teach your kids to be selfish? Do you have to teach your kids to fight with their siblings? Do you have to teach your kids to hit? It's kind of surprising when you see this little kid shove their brother or sister so you say, "Where did you learn that from?" There is this thing that kids naturally do because they are born with sin. We have that still today.

That also tends to make us jealous. How do we see that where sometimes people can be jealous? I have a few things here. Imagine on Christmas and one of your kids gets some awesome little Hot Wheels. Maybe like a little, yellow truck, an awesome little sports car, and even the Bat Mobile. They are so excited! They got these awesome gifts. They are going to love these new Hot Wheels.

But then their brother or sister next to them opens up a present and it's a big fire truck—the Paw Patrol Fire Truck! What does the first one do that got the Hot Wheels? Are they still so excited for the Hot Wheels, or are they looking over at that fire truck and whining "I don't want these"? They were just so happy with the gift they got but

then they saw the gift that someone else got and they don't want it anymore. They are jealous and they want THAT gift.

We might say kids do that all the time, but do we do that too? Do we *reject gifts out of jealousy*? When we have something and we have been blessed with so many things, but we see the things that others get and we're just so jealous that we are no longer happy with what we have?

As Paul is writing in Romans, he talks about this jealousy that he is hoping actually happens. He is talking about the Jewish people and the Gentiles and the section, if you heard it and if you read it again a few times, it's not the easiest section to understand. It talks about the Gentiles believing (in Verse 13). ***I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?*** He is speaking about the Gentiles and that they have reconciliation but the Israelites are rejecting the gift that they were given and he is actually hoping to envy them, to help them to believe.

What is this all about? What is this picture? The easiest way to explain this whole text and what is going on is actually to look at the story of the prodigal son. You remember the prodigal son. One son goes away and he even tells his dad "I wish you were dead. Give me all the money that I would get as an inheritance," and what does he do? He goes off into sinful living and wastes all the money and is down on his luck, wishing to eat the food that pigs eat. Finally he comes to his senses and wants to come home and what happens? His father welcomes him home and gives him grace and forgiveness without anything. He is so sorry, but the son doesn't even get to say the words. We see, as the theme talks about, that grace is for all, even for that person, even for me, the one who doesn't deserve it. We see that. That's the Gentiles. The Gentiles are the ones who didn't have the Law. They didn't have the tradition. They weren't God's chosen people. But God has welcomed them and gives them this grace and forgiveness.

But then, as there is this party going on, we have the older brother. The older brother here, imagine him as being Israel. Israel sees the Gentiles and they are saying "They don't deserve this. I have followed your ways from way back. We have the patriarchs. We eat kosher food. We don't eat bacon. We wash our hands correctly. We go to the synagogue and temple. We do everything correct, God. We should be your people. You should reject them." But what does the father do? He is sitting there saying "Come into the party. I love you just as I love them." This is really what Paul is saying. He sees that the Gentiles are in the party and they have received this grace and forgiveness but the Israelites are outside the party, angry and jealous that "You butchered the best meat

for that son, who doesn't deserve it! I deserve this! How can you show love to them?" So the Israelites, like the older son, are sitting outside the party and Paul is pleading for them to come in.

So what helps us? What helps the Israelites, the Jews, the people of our time who are like the Jews or Gentiles, the ones who have received grace, the ones who maybe had grace and now are straying or jealous or are not in the Word and in danger? As we read on, it says this is Verse 28. ***As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*** That last sentence is striking. ***For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.*** From nature, from being out in the world and how the world works, would you believe that? Would you say that? I don't think so—that God has bound us all over to disobedience? What does that mean? I think it's important that we are in God's Word. *We need to be in the Word* so that we hear this message, that God has bound us over to disobedience, that we fall short. We need to hear the Law to hear who we really are.

That goes for those Jewish people—the ones who are outside the party and jealous and angry and saying "It's all about me. I've done good. I have kept the Law. I am a good person. I haven't murdered." Or maybe we even stick up our nose and say "Yeah, I got grace! I'm here at church. I'm pretty good. I know I'm saved by grace but look at all the good things I do." We still need to hear that Law and be reminded every day that we ARE disobedient, that we fall short. Why is it important to hear that? Because then we hear the second part. He has bound us all over to disobedience ***so that he may have mercy on them all.*** We need to be in the Word to hear the Law so that we can hear the Gospel. We need to be in the Word *in order to* hear and *receive mercy.*

I was talking to someone just the other day about a friend who they had been trying to get back into church. They said, "He said he is good. He goes out into nature and he prays." What? That's great. God shows us His beauty in nature, but what do you not hear in nature? You don't hear about who you are and what you've done. You don't hear about who God is and what His love is for you—that God has poured that love and mercy upon us all, even me, even you, the ones who don't deserve it, the son who goes away, the one who was rebellious and went away from the church or disobeyed their parents and lived a ruckus life and comes back and is repentant. Or maybe you're the person now who is prideful. God shows that love and mercy to us all. We need to hear that day in and day out because you don't hear that grace and mercy anywhere else. We need to hear about how Jesus is the perfect One, how God, because of what Jesus

did, could welcome us back, how He can lavish this love and forgiveness upon us because He has punished Christ for all of our sins, for all of our disobedience. We have mercy because Christ won that mercy for us. We need to hear that and be in that Word day in and day out because it's easy to forget.

Notice that when you are given gifts, you have that gift, but what can you do? Paul writes and says that ***God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.*** When God has given his gifts, when God is protecting you, no one can snatch you from His hand. I think a good picture of that is our Old Testament Lesson with Rahab and her family. The Israelites say "Bring your brothers, bring your sisters, bring everyone into your house and if they are in that house and you have that scarlet rope, they are safe." It's the gift—protection and peace—but what? If they reject that, if they go out into the streets, what happens? They have rejected that safety and peace and there is no protection.

How is that for us? We have to be careful that we *don't reject His grace and mercy.* That's really what Israel did. Israel said they did not want to be saved by grace. They have their Laws. They have their ways. And even though they were being shared about this grace and mercy, even though they knew it, over and over again in the Old Testament they said "No. We want to be saved this way." They had been given a gift but they rejected it!

There are people (maybe friends or family) that you know that are on the verge of that, of rejecting that grace and mercy. Through our Barnabas program, our goal is to show love and to show Christ to others—to keep them close to the Word so they can hear about the love and mercy that Christ has for them. Sometimes we wonder if we should be doing a program like this, calling people up or encouraging them to be in God's Word. Think about your kids. If you are in a sports program, maybe you have 10-20 practices and a game in between. Imagine if you had 10-20 practices and you went to one, would your coach be pretty happy and say "Yes, you are still part of the team. You came to one practice." But there were 19 you missed! It's not saying they are not a part of the Church if they are not in church, but it's hard to be a part of something when you are never there. It's not saying that you can't be in God's Word when you're not at church. You can read devotions. But here is where you really hear the Law and Gospel and where you get to receive the Sacraments (like today) and taste your forgiveness. So we aren't judging anyone's hearts, but we're trying to show that love and compassion in saying "This is here, where we KNOW that you are going to hear that you are loved and forgiven. We care about you. We don't want you to reject that grace and mercy."

As we look at those around us or the rest of the world, we always have to be aware of ourselves. What are the ways that I am cluttering my life or putting things up in front of God or making myself to be too proud? We don't want to reject that gift because God has brought us into that family, the Church that is for all.

I used this devotion recently with some of the shut-ins I visited and talked about how John the Baptist looks and says ***“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*** ([John 1:29](#)) Or in [John 3:16](#): ***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*** Martin Luther is famous for saying this: “Wouldn’t it have been awesome if in the Bible it said ‘God so loved Martin Luther’? You could look at it and say ‘It has my name in there! But maybe there is another Martin Luther, so what if that’s not me?’” But God says “No. This gift and this love is for the whole world.” Are you included in that?—of course! And we receive that by God’s grace and mercy in Christ, through faith, through the Word, through the Sacraments. So our joy is to be in the church, to be a part of that Church where we hear that, and then we can share that.

We have the Friendship Sunday coming up. There are invites in the back where we get to share about the peace that we have, the joy of knowing that God loves the world, including your friends and family. What a joy it is to have that mercy, to have that grace, and to be able to share that with the world. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ([Philippians 4:7](#)) Amen.