15th Sunday After Pentecost

September 5, 2021

The Season The Sundays after Pentecost focus on how Christians live in response to all that God has done for us. This part of the Church Year focuses on *Jesus' Grace Is All In All To Us*.

The Sunday With this Sunday readings from Gospel of Mark resumes and with it a shift again in emphasis for the third cycle of the Pentecost season. Loosely expressed, the emphasis in this third cycle might be this: Jesus wants to so deepen our understanding of his grace that he becomes all in all to us. The particular emphasis in the readings for this Sunday is the truth that all God pleasing obedience must begin in the heart.

Opening Hymn

We Are the Lord's Hymn 427



Text: Karl J. P. Spitta, 1801–59; tr. Charles R. Astley, 1825–78. Tune: EIRENE (11 10 11 10) Frances R. Havergal, 1836–79.

Stand

- M: O Lord, open my lips.
- C: And my mouth shall declare your praise
- M: Hasten to save me, O God.



- C: O Lord, come quickly to help me.
- M: Give glory to God, our light and our life.
- C: Come, oh, come, let us worship.

Come, Oh, Come Let Us Sing To The Lord



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Psalm of the Day We will sing the refrain and read the verses responsively Psalm 119c



is now, and will be forever. <u>A</u>men.

Refrain

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First Lesson

Deuteronomy 4:1, 2, 6-9

God is serious about all of his Word, both the law and the gospel. As the verses left out of the reading (3-5) make clear, those who only take God's gifts seriously soon lose those gifts as a consequence of despising his commands. His commands are good because he who gave them is good. And because he is good, his abundant blessing through a peaceful and orderly life rests on those who follow his Word. That blessing brings forth a still greater blessing and honor: those who do not know his Word may be moved to hear it by the evidence of God's blessings on the godly lives of Christians.

4 Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ² Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

⁶ Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." ⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

⁹ Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (NIV)

Gospel

Mark 7:1-8, 14, 15, 21-23

Adding to God's Word is just as bad as subtracting from it. In both cases man sets aside what God has said in favor of what he wants in order to justify himself apart from God's Word and Christ's work. Precisely because the Word of both the law and the gospel is addressed to the heart, it allows for no additions, no subtractions. For to the extent that the heart is cleansed by the gospel, to that extent what flows from it will be clean and in accord with the law. An unclean heart can produce only unclean works, no matter how clean those works may appear on the outside. Those who take the law seriously need first and always the cleansing power of the gospel, lest their outward works be only outward and ultimately a mask for hypocrisy. On the other hand, those who refuse to take God's law seriously prove thereby that their hearts are still unclean and separated from God. The sin that begins in the heart will not agree to stay there; it will look for ways to get out and express itself. The Pharisees should have recognized that happening in their own hearts: their hearts harbored hatred for Jesus which yearned for expression in acts that ended in murder during Holy Week.

7 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus ² and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

⁶He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

"These people honor me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ They worship me in vain;

their teachings are merely human rules.'[Isaiah 29:13]

⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."

²¹ For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person." (NIV)

Seasonal Response

M: Give thanks to the Lord; call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done

Hymn of the Day

O God, My Faithful God Hymn 459



Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647, abr., adapt.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.

Tune: O GOTT, DU FROMMER GOTT (II) (67 67 66 66) Neu-vermehrtes . . . Gesangbuch, 3rd ed., Meiningen, 1693, alt.

Sermon

James 1:17-27

Calls for a sanctified life always find their basis and their motivation in the precious gospel message of God's gifts to us. His gifts are all good and perfect (even and especially the crosses—a point coming up on another Sunday) because God is changeless; he only knows how to give good and perfect gifts that suit our needs and fit our circumstances in life. But to recognize those gifts and to appreciate them and then make use of them in life we need the Word. The Word clears the clutter from life and the temptation to hypocrisy from the heart by showing us the first and best gifts, the gifts of salvation and adoption. With such gifts how could we doubt that anything he

does in our lives would be anything but good and perfect? Therefore, listen to the Word; be honest with God in confession; get on with the life that reflects the good and perfect gifts of God. For his gifts are given to us as a reflection of his goodness, so that we can reflect his goodness in our use of those gifts.

¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (NIV)







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Lord, Have Mercy Kyrie

M: In the morning, O Lord, I call to you; be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

C: Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord's Prayer

C: 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.

Prayer of the Day

- M: O Lord Jesus Christ, preserve the congregation of believers with your never-failing mercy. Help us avoid whatever is wicked and harmful, and guide us in the way that leads to our salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C: Amen.

Prayer for Grace

- M: Almighty and everlasting God, give us an increase of faith, hope, and love; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C: Amen.
- M: Let us praise the Lord.
- C: Thanks be to God.

Blessing

M: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Be Seated

Closing Hymn

Renew Me, O Eternal Light Hymn 471:1-2



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