

Worship in the Home

A resource provided by First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Rush City, MN

17th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2020

Jesus' parable about two sons who don't do what they say reveals surprises in the reign of God. In the reading from Ezekiel the people claim the ways of the Lord are unfair, while God offers repentance and new life. Paul urges us to look to Christ as a model of humility, putting the interests of others above our own. Nourished by the broken bread and shared cup, we offer our lives for the sake of our needy world.



This service is supplemented with an online service at goes live on Sunday mornings at 8:00 AM at www.rushcityfirstlutheran.org

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

Ezekiel challenges those who think they cannot change because of what their parents were and did, or who think they cannot reverse their own previous behavior. God insistently invites people to turn and live.

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live. (Ezekiel 18:30-32)

Psalms 145:1-8

¹To | you, O LORD,
I lift | up my soul.
²My God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.
³Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those
be put to shame | who are treacherous.
⁴Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths.
⁵Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all | the day long.
⁶Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,

for they are from | everlasting.
⁷Remember not the sins of my youth
and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love
and for the sake of your good- | ness, O LORD.
⁸You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.
⁹You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.

Second Reading: Philippians 2:1-13

As part of a call for harmony rather than self-seeking, Paul uses a very early Christian hymn that extols the selflessness of Christ in his obedient death on the cross. Christ's selfless perspective is to be the essential perspective we share as the foundation for Christian accord.

¹If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, 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; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32

After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.

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.’ ²⁹He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. ³¹Which 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. ³²For 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.” (Matthew 21:38-32)

Sermon

A sermon is provided for the online service. You may also consider this reflection.

Though the Ten Commandments say that punishment for the iniquity of parents will go on to the third and fourth generation, the prophet Ezekiel says otherwise. We shall be punished for only our own sins. Then the prophet counsels us to get a new heart. This prophetic word is still very hard: our own sins are way enough for serious punishment. Like the sons in the parable, we are often the ones who boldly say yes to the will of God and then do nothing. And how shall we get a new heart? But the Gospel according to Matthew has begun to turn toward the story of the cross, and in this Sunday’s narrative Jesus stands in the temple, mysterious in his authority, warning the world’s authorities, and showing mercy to serious outsiders and sinners. Paul shows us where that mystery goes: through Christ’s death and

resurrection, God is at work in us. For a new heart, we are together given the mind of Christ. There is indeed much consolation, compassion and sharing of the Spirit in this word. Starting again, in humility, we may look to the needs of others in a profoundly needy world.

Hymn of the Day

["Lord, Keep Us Steadfast In Your Word"](https://youtu.be/_O89jlgLtWM)

https://youtu.be/_O89jlgLtWM

Prayers

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need, responding to each petition with the words “Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.”

A brief silence.

Throughout the globe is the church: many assemblies are postponed by the virus, our songs quieted, our leaders searching for new ways forward.

A brief silence.

That you will continue to inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ, we pray to you, faithful God.

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us nature is strained: polar ice is melting, excessive rains ravage the land, fires consume forests, fields, and homes, and animals are deprived of habitat.

A brief silence.

That you will preserve and protect the earth, we pray to you, mighty God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us is a needy world: governments allow injustice, violence threatens stability, people experience prejudice, reforms are thwarted, workers are unemployed, medical facilities are strained, children are abused.

A brief silence.

That you will save the people in all the nations of the world, we pray to you, compassionate God:

Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

In our nation’s courts, we see justice delayed and justice denied. Yet we thank you for the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and for her passion for equality under the law.

A brief silence.

That you will uphold honest judges and insightful juries throughout our criminal justice system, and that you will assist our nation in its task of filling the Supreme Court, we pray to you, righteous God:
Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Around us are the sick: there is starvation, the virus continues, many persons receive no medical attention, our neighbors and dear ones are ill.

A brief silence.

That you will bless all ministries of care and will relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit, we pray to you, merciful God.
Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Nearby are needs of which we are unaware.

A brief silence.

That you will send your holy angels to uphold all who face personal troubles, we pray to you, benevolent God:
Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Inside many hearts there is both joy and sorrow. We pray now for ourselves:

A longer period of silence.

That you will give us new hearts and a new spirit, we pray to you, loving God.
Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

Before us lived countless of the faithful — the famous and the forgotten, our relatives and strangers. We lament their deaths, and we praise their witness.

A brief silence.

That we may confess Jesus Christ as Lord through our life and at our death, we pray to you, eternal God.
Hear our laments, and receive our prayers.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

You might now sing or read:
["O God, My Faithful God"](#)
<https://youtu.be/EeJmk0Kqgz0>

Gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, rich in love, we bless your name and give you thanks. In our need, you make haste to help us. You plant us beside streams of your wisdom, teach us in pastures greening with truth, and guide us on the path of your promise. By your Spirit awaken our faith, that, feasting on your Word, we may love you more fully and serve our neighbor more faithfully; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

**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.**

Blessing
Mothering God,
Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life.
Amen.

Devotional Music Links

For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress:

["Enviado: The Lord Now Sends Us Forth;"](#)

["Jesus, Feed Us;"](#)

["May Your Unfailing Love Be with Us."](#)

Readings for the Week:

Monday Psalm 28. **Tuesday** Revelation 12:7-12. **Wednesday** Judges 16:23-31. **Thursday** Psalm 80:7-15. **Friday** Philippians 2:14-18; 3:1-4a. **Saturday** Jeremiah 6:1-10. **Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 5:1-7; Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46.

Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word



1 Lord, keep us stead-fast in your word; curb those who
 2 Lord Je-sus Christ, your pow'r make known, for you are
 3 O Com-fort-er of price-less worth, send peace and



by de- ceit or sword would wrest the king-dom from your Son
 Lord of lords a-lone; de-fend your ho-ly church, that we
 u-ni-ty on earth; sup-port us in our fi-nal strife



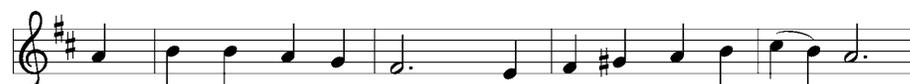
and bring to naught all he has done.
 may sing your praise e-ter-nal-ly.
 and lead us out of death to life.

Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: ERHALT UNS, HERR, J. Klug, *Geistliche Lieder*, 1543

O God, My Faithful God



1 O God, my faith-ful God, true foun-tain ev-er flow-ing,
 2 Give me the strength to do with read-y heart and will-ing,
 3 Keep me from say-ing words that lat-er need re-call-ing;
 4 When dan-gers gath-er round, oh, keep me calm and fear-less;



with-out whom noth-ing is, all per-fect gifts be-stow-ing:
 what-ev-er you com-mand, my call-ing here ful-fill-ing—
 guard me, lest i-dle speech may from my lips be fall-ing;
 help me to bear the cross when life seems dark and cheer-less;



give me a health-y frame, and may I have with-in
 to do it when I ought, with all my might—and bless
 but when, with-in my place, I must and ought to speak,
 help me, as you have taught, to love both great and small,



a con-science free from blame, a soul un-stained by sin.
 what-ev-er I have wrought, for you must give suc-cess.
 then to my words give grace, lest I of-fend the weak.
 and, by your Spir-it's might, to live at peace with all.

Text: Johann Heermann, 1585–1647; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: WAS FRAG ICH NACH DER WELT, Ahasuerus Fritsch, 1629–1701