

Worship in the Home

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

15th Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2020

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the 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

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Psalms 103:8-13

⁸LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;
⁹**you will not allow ways to accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.**
¹⁰You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

¹¹**For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love
for those who fear you.**

¹²As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed
our transgressions from us.

¹³**As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion
for those who fear you, O LORD.**

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹For it is written,
“As I live, says the Lord,
every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”
¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Sermon

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

The readings accuse us: like Joseph’s brothers, we are afraid of people we have betrayed. Like Paul’s readers, we often argue with each other about issues that do not matter. Like Peter in Matthew, we want to limit our forgiveness of others. But One who is greater than Joseph is here. Jesus Christ was thrown into a deeper pit than Joseph when he was taken to the cross. Yet, in the resurrection he has become an even greater source of forgiveness and bread. Like the fictional king of the parable, God in Christ has forgiven us — each one of us — an impossible debt: 10,000 talents being something like 150,000 years of salary for a skilled worker. Strengthened by that forgiveness, poured over us today by the Spirit alive in this word, we are enabled again and again to forgive our neighbor whose debt to us, by comparison, is like only a few weeks of salary. Renewed in this mercy, we will live and die to the Lord.

Hymn of the Day ["O Christ, Our Hope"](https://youtu.be/jg20vvDnAY4)
<https://youtu.be/jg20vvDnAY4>

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 “receive our prayer.”

God of open arms, make Christians into signs of your gracious welcome, to both members and newcomers, whether meeting physically or digitally. Strengthen faith through Bible studies and Sunday schools, confirmation classes and youth ministries, and nurture new ventures for education and growth. Bless bishops, pastors, and deacons for their work in this unprecedented time.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of lands and seas, continue your care for your creation. Where human selfishness has brought ruin and destruction, we ask you to heal and renew your earth. Preserve the lands from fire and storm. Protect the sources of food that your creatures need for life.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of justice, lead the nations away from the ways of violence. Guide the United Nations and other

organizations that seek reconciliation across national borders. Show families, neighborhoods, and nations how to welcome diversity while sharing common ground. Preserve our election season from abuse and rancor.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of our homeland, visit the American cities that are addressing local racism. Stand with both protesters and police, that civil society may be preserved and improved. Bring both healing and justice to our land.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of the sufferers, visit prisons and care homes with health and hope. Free victims of human trafficking and forced labor. Deliver all who are bound by debt. Feed all who hunger and provide safety to migrants. Protect firefighters and first responders. Heal the sick, especially those we name here before you:

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of goodness, once more we beg for a way through the pandemic. Comfort the afflicted. Support medical workers. Prepare a vaccine.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

God of tender power, we live to you. Hear now, we pray, the desires of our hearts.

A longer period of silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are yours. We thank you for those who have led us in the faith, especially those we commemorate this week: John Chrysostom, bishop Cyprian, Hildegard of Bingen, and Dag Hammarskjöld. Hold us with them in your everlasting love.

A brief silence.

O God, you are full of compassion;
receive our prayer.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through 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.**

You might now sing or read "*In Thee Is Gladness*"

[In Thee Is Gladness](#)

<https://youtu.be/EE8N-BK7ojk>

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:

["Bless God's Holy Name;"](#)

["I Come with Joy;"](#)

["Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive."](#)

Readings for the Week

Monday John 3:13-17. **Tuesday** Romans 14:13—15:2. **Wednesday** Genesis 50:22-26. **Thursday** Psalm 145:1-8. **Friday** 2 Corinthians 13:5-10. **Saturday** Zephaniah 2:13-15. **Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost** Jonah 3:10—4:11; Psalm 145:1-8; Philippians 1:21-30; Matthew 20:1-16.

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Reflection: Gordon Lathrop Prayers: Gail Ramshaw

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O Christ, Our Hope



1 O Christ, our hope, our hearts' de - sire, cre - a - tion's
 2 How vast your mer - cy to ac - cept the bur - den
 3 But now the bonds of death are burst, the ran - som
 4 Oh, let your might - y love pre - vail to purge us
 5 All praise to you, as - cend - ed Lord; all glo - ry



might-y Lord, re - deem - er of the fall - en world, by
 of our sin, and bow your head in cru - el death to
 has been paid; you reign a - bove at God's right hand, in
 of our pride, that we may stand be - fore your throne by
 ev - er be to Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it blest through



ho - ly love out - poured, by ho - ly love out - poured:
 make us clean with - in, to make us clean with - in.
 robes of light ar - rayed, in robes of light ar - rayed.
 mer - cy pu - ri - fied, by mer - cy pu - ri - fied.
 all e - ter - ni - ty, through all e - ter - ni - ty!

Text: Latin hymn, c. 8th cent.; tr. John Chandler, 1806–1876, adapt.
 Music: LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN, Nikolaus Herman, 1480–1561

In Thee Is Gladness



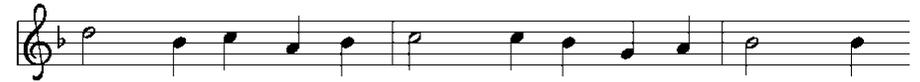
1 In thee is glad - ness a - mid all sad - ness, Je - sus, sun - shine of my
 2 Je - sus is ours! . . . We fear no pow - ers, not of earth or sin or



heart. By thee are giv - en the gifts of heav - en, thou the
 death. He sees and bless - es in worst dis - tress - es; he can



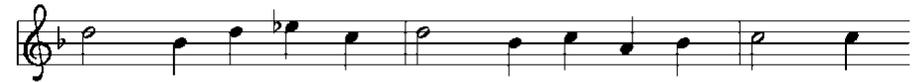
true re - deem - er art. Our souls thou wak - est; our bonds thou
 change them with a breath. Where - fore the sto - ry tell of his



break - est. Who trusts thee sure - ly has built se - cure - ly
 glo - ry with heart and voic - es; all heav'n re - joic - es



and stands for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! Our hearts are
 in him for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia! We shout for



pin - ing to see thy shin - ing, dy - ing or liv - ing,
 glad - ness, tri - umph o'er sad - ness, love him and praise him



to thee are cleav - ing; naught can us sev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!
 and still shall raise him glad hymns for - ev - er: Al - le - lu - ia!

Text: Johann Lindemann, 1549–1631; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: IN DIR IST FREUDE, Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi, 1556–1622