
St. Paul's Episcopal Church Piney Parish



The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

July 26, 2020

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Officiant Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

All And blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PURITY

Officiant Let us pray.

All Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus, only Son of the Father
Lord God,
Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us;
you are seated at the right hand of
the Father, receive our prayers.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord;
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Officiant The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

Officiant Let us pray.

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: Increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we lose not the things eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

YOUNG DISCIPLES MOMENT

THE PSALM

Psalms 119:129-136

¹²⁹Your decrees are wonderful; *
therefore I obey them with all my heart.

¹³⁰When your word goes forth it gives light; *
it gives understanding to the simple.

¹³¹I open my mouth and pant; *
I long for your commandments.

¹³²Turn to me in mercy, *
as you always do to those who love your Name.

¹³³Steady my footsteps in your word; *
let no iniquity have dominion over me.

¹³⁴Rescue me from those who oppress me, *
and I will keep your commandments.

¹³⁵ Let your countenance shine upon your servant *

and teach me your statutes.

¹³⁶ My eyes shed streams of tears, *

because people do not keep your law.

EPISTLE LESSON

Romans 8:26-39

Troy Pettersen

In this lection, Paul expresses his great confidence that God is for us, making love known to humankind through the sacrifice of the Son and the help of the Spirit. The Spirit pleads with God for us, interceding when words fail. We learn that God works for good with those called according to God's purpose. Neither mortal distress nor supernatural power can separate us from such love.

In the same way, the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don't know what we should pray, but the Spirit himself pleads our case with unexpressed groans. The one who searches hearts knows how the Spirit thinks, because he pleads for the saints, consistent with God's will. We know that God works all things together for good for the ones who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose. We know this because God knew them in advance, and he decided in advance that they would be conformed to the image of his Son. That way his Son would be the first of many brothers and sisters. Those who God decided in advance would be conformed to his Son, he also called. Those whom he called, he also made righteous. Those whom he made righteous, he also glorified.

So what are we going to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He didn't spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. Won't he also freely give us all things with him?

Who will bring a charge against God's elect people? It is God who acquits them. Who is going to convict them? It is Christ Jesus who died, even more, who was raised, and who also is at God's right side. It is Christ Jesus who also pleads our case for us.

Who will separate us from Christ's love? Will we be separated by trouble, or distress, or harassment, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

We are being put to death all day long for your sake.

We are treated like sheep for slaughter.

But in all these things we win a sweeping victory through the one who loved us. I'm convinced that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord: not death or life, not angels or rulers, not present things or future things, not powers or height or depth, or any other thing that is created.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Our gospel is five of Jesus' short parables: the mustard seed, the leaven, the hidden treasure, the priceless pearl, and the net. They suggest how the action of God's reign is realized. What seems insignificant is suddenly of great importance. It is like a marvelous gift which one seizes upon joyfully and for which all else is willingly sacrificed. The Kingdom takes all kinds, and the sorting out must await the end. Wise servants will recognize treasure both old and new.

Officiant The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

All **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

He told another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and planted in his field. It's the smallest of all seeds. But when it's grown, it's the largest of all vegetable plants. It becomes a tree so that the birds in the sky come and nest in its branches."

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in a bushel of wheat flour until the yeast had worked its way through all the dough.”

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure that somebody hid in a field, which someone else found and covered up. Full of joy, the finder sold everything and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he found one very precious pearl, he went and sold all that he owned and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that people threw into the lake and gathered all kinds of fish. When it was full, they pulled it to the shore, where they sat down and put the good fish together into containers. But the bad fish they threw away. That’s the way it will be at the end of the present age. The angels will go out and separate the evil people from the righteous people, and will throw the evil ones into a burning furnace. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.

“Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked.

They said to him, “Yes.”

Then he said to them, “Therefore, every legal expert who has been trained as a disciple for the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who brings old and new things out of their treasure chest.”

Officiant The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

THE SERMON

The Rev. Steve Seely

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH: THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Elijah Jones

Officiant

Let us bring before the Lord the prayers that dwell in the heart of our community, responding, “Hear us, good Lord.

Intercessor

Spirit of Wisdom, guide our tongues, that we may speak of your marvelous works and rejoice in your bountiful gifts of forgiveness and new life. In the Diocesan Cycle of Prayer, we pray for St. James' Church, Indian Head; St. James' Church, Potomac; St. James' Children's School, Potomac; and, St. Anne's Church, Damascus; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Righteous Governor, assist our leaders in discerning truth from deception, and good from evil, so that they may exercise their office with integrity and be signs of hope to the people of our country and world; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Source of strength, be with us in our weakness, and help those who live in the dark corners of hopelessness, so that your love may reveal a greater light and dispel the fears that visit every heart; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Bearer of our sins, remove the dust that blinds us to our shortcomings, so that in admitting our wayward thoughts and actions we may turn toward your mercy and receive your forgiveness; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Creator of the universe, who brings us joy in the diversity of all that the eye can behold, make us ever grateful for the splendor of your making and ever protective of its fruits; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Son of Righteousness, bring the dead into the brilliance of your light, and make us thankful for the intercession of your saints; let us pray.

Hear us, good Lord.

Bound together in the love of Christ, let us continue our prayers.

(Please add your intercessions/thanksgivings)

The Officiant will add a concluding collect.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant As Christ teaches us, we pray:

All **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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE CONFESSION OF SIN & ABSOLUTION

Deacon Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

All **God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.**

Deacon Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

THE PEACE

Officiant The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People **And also with you.**

BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS

PRAYER FOR A BIRTHDAY

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants *she/he/they* begin another year. Grant that *she/he/they* may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen *his/her/their* trust in your goodness all the days of *his/her/their* life(ves); through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR ANNIVERSARY

O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his Church: Send therefore your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Officiant During this time in which we cannot gather to celebrate the great sacrament of Holy Communion, let us offer our selves, souls, and bodies to God in this prayer for spiritual communion.

All In union, O Lord, with the faithful at every altar of your church where your blessed Body and Blood are being offered, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving for creation and all the blessings of this life. I present to you my soul and body, with the earnest wish that I may ever be united to you.

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament, and since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to you, and embrace you with all the affections of our souls. Let nothing ever separate you from me. May I live in you, and may you live in me, both in this life, and in the life to come. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Guide me O thou great Jehovah

vv. 1,2

CLOSING PRAYER

DISMISSAL

1 Guide me, O thou great Je - ho - vah, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, whence the heal - ing
 3 When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but thou art might - y;
 stream doth flow; let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar
 fears sub - side; death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion,

hold me with thy power - ful hand; bread of hea - ven,
 lead me all my jour - ney through; strong de - liv - erer,
 land me safe on Ca - naan's side; songs of prais - es,

bread of hea - ven, feed me now and ev - er -
 strong de - liv - erer, be thou still my strength and
 songs of prais - es, I will ev - er give to

Questions for Reflection

When God asks Solomon to make a wish, Solomon does not ask for longevity or wealth, but for the wisdom to discern what is right. What is the one wish that you would ask of God? What does God's response to Solomon reveal about the desires of our hearts and what is ultimate and lasting in God's eyes?

Household Prayer: Morning

I awake this day eager to receive divine instruction and to enact your word. As the day unfolds, may I step more deeply into your heavenly realm through loving you and serving your world. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Your Word is wonderful, O God! It has ordered my day and guided my path to you. As I sleep this night, make your face to shine upon me so that I may awaken as a mirror of your likeness as I journey from darkness into light. Amen.

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