

Sunday, September 10, 2017
14th Sunday after Pentecost

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a part of relationships and life in community. Jesus' words in today's gospel are often used in situations having to do with church discipline. The prophet Ezekiel tells of warning the wicked to turn from their ways, and Paul reminds us that love is the fulfilling of the law. We gather in the name of Christ, assured that he is present among us with gifts of peace and reconciliation.

PRELUDE

"Joyful, Joyful"

Michael Burkhardt

*GATHERING SONG

"Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee"

ELW 836

Joyful, joyful we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love!
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before thee,
praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heav'n reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird, and flowing fountain
call us to rejoice in thee.

Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean-depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine!

*GREETING

P *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

G **And also with you.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

“Festival Canticle”

pg. 140

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Power, riches, wisdom and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all creation:**

**Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign.

Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *O Lord God,*

G **enliven and preserve your church with your perpetual mercy. Without your help, we mortals will fail; remove far from us everything that is harmful, and lead us toward all that gives life and salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen!**

ANTHEM

“Bring Joy”
Chancel Choir

Joseph Martin

FIRST READING

Ezekiel 33:7-11

God appointed Ezekiel as a sentinel for the house of Israel. Ezekiel must faithfully convey God’s warnings to the people. Remarkably, God—who is about to attack Jerusalem—gives a warning with the hope that repentance will make the attack unnecessary.

⁷So you, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. ⁸If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. ⁹But if you warn the wicked

to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life.

¹⁰Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” ¹¹Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

Reflection

In this text, God expects Ezekiel to warn the people of their sinfulness. What is a sentinel? (verse 7) On our vacation to the northeast, we stopped at Fort Ontario. There was a high tower, where the sentinel stood and watched for approaching enemy troops. How does Ezekiel, the sentinel, get word that the people need to be warned? What happens if the enemy comes and the sentinel doesn't give a warning? What is God's warning to Ezekiel, his sentinel, if he doesn't give the warning? (verse 8) What will happen if the people do not heed the warning of the sentinel? (verse 9) What if the people hear the warning, but don't know what to do? (verses 10-11) How is this text a sign of God's grace?

PSALM 119:33-40

³³Teach me, O LORD, the way | of your statutes,
and I shall keep it | to the end.

³⁴**Give me understanding, and I shall | keep your teaching;
I shall keep it with | all my heart.**

³⁵Lead me in the path of | your commandments,
for that is | my desire.

³⁶**Incline my heart to | your decrees
and not to | unjust gain.**

³⁷Turn my eyes from be- | holding falsehood;
give me life | in your way.

³⁸**Fulfill your promise | to your servant,
which is for | those who fear you.**

³⁹Turn away the reproach | that I dread,
because your judg- | ments are good.

⁴⁰**Behold, I long for | your commandments;
by your righteousness en- | liven me.**

Reflection

This psalm is a prayer by the psalmist, perhaps one of Ezekiel's hearers. For what the does the psalmist pray? The assumption of the psalmist is that this prayer is a way of life, not just words. How do we live our lives praying this prayer?

SECOND READING

Romans 13:8-14

The obligation of Christians is to love one another and so fulfill the heart and goal of the law. Clothes make the person as we “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” and live today in light of the future God has in store for us.

⁸Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Reflection

What is Paul’s summation of the commandments? (verse 8) This reminds me of Jesus’ answer to the question of the Pharisees in Matthew 22:34-40, “Which is the greatest commandment?” Why is “love one another” the basis for the commandments, as Paul sees it? (verse 10) Why is Paul concerned about time, in this discussion of how Christians are to live? (verse 11) Whether we assume the end of the world is near, I can attest that as we get older, the end for each of us is nearer than it was. What are the works of darkness that Paul warns about? (verse 12) Paul lists “reveling and drunkenness, ...debauchery and licentiousness,...quarreling and jealousy.” It occurs to me that many of us who don’t really indulge in reveling and drunkenness, etc., might need to lay aside other works of darkness, just as judgment, self-righteousness, unkindness, etc. What do you think? How do we live as though salvation is already here? (see verses 8-10, for example)

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“With a Voice of Singing”

**With a voice of singing
declare ye this,
and let it be heard,
Alleluia.**

***GOSPEL**

Matthew 18:15-20

Jesus offers practical advice to his disciples on how individuals—and the church as a whole—should show wrongdoers their need for repentance.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹⁵“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Reflection

In this text, Jesus instructs the disciples about dealing with sin. What are the steps you should take when someone sins against you? (verses 15-17) It goes without saying (but I'm saying it anyway) that the first step is not to complain to someone else about the one they perceive as the sinner. How should someone who refuses to listen be treated? (verse 17) Notes in the Lutheran Bible point out what we already know, that Jesus is a friend of tax collectors and sinners. Which complicates that whole "step by step" process, doesn't it? Another complication, which a reflection I read on this text pointed out, is, what happens when we who are older, lifelong members of the church are the ones who do the sinning? The author of the reflection reminded me that Dylann Roof, who killed the members of the Emanuel AME Church during a prayer meeting, was a member of an ELCA congregation. Those of us who are of German, Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish heritage may assume that real Lutherans are of northern European heritage. This is a reflection of the assumption of many that "real Americans" are white. As we read about hundreds of African-American men and women who are shot by police, who so far have mostly not been charged with a crime and in all cases (that I know of) have not been convicted of a crime, we may be called by Jesus to wonder if the true church is not made up of children and babies (see Matthew 18:1-5), outcasts (Matthew 15:21-28), sick, hungry, thirsty people (Matthew 15:29-38) and others who are calling on us, the well-integrated, middle class people in the church to be reconciled to them. The church we have known is changing, that's for sure. For those of us who are comfortable in it, we grieve that change. Jesus calls us to be reconciled, and perhaps the ones we find most unlikely are the sentinels God has appointed for us. What do you think?

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Marlene Hebb

SERMON

"What's the Rush?"

Rev. Roger Lenander

SONG OF THE DAY

"Freely Freely"

**God forgave my sin in Jesus' name
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to *Refrain***

Refrain

**He said freely freely
You have received
Freely freely give
Go in My name
And because you believe
Others will know that I live**

**All pow'r is giv'n in Jesus' name
In earth and heav'n in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you**

To share His pow'r as He told me to *Refrain*

***APOSTLES' CREED**

**☑ I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen!**

***PRAYER SONG**

"Cares Chorus"

**I cast all my cares upon You
I lay all of my burdens
Down at Your feet
And anytime that I don't know
What to do
I will cast all my cares upon You**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

We pray for the church universal. Reconcile our differences. Forgive our divisions. Unite us at your table. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For those who experienced the destructive forces of Hurricane Harvey and the subsequent flooding and now endure the anguish and suffering from personal injury and the loss of property, Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For those called home to the Lord during this natural disaster of Hurricane Harvey and the subsequent flooding, may they be granted rest and numbered among the saints and may their grieving loved ones be comforted by Your divine grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For all those involved in serving their neighbor during this time including the first responders and those assisting in the continuing relief efforts of the victims of Hurricane Harvey and the subsequent flooding, strengthen them in mind, body and soul and inspire all of us to be charitable with our generosity to our brothers and sisters in their time of need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For all those in need. Bind up our hurts. Heal divisions in our families, friendships, and neighborhoods. Comfort those who need your special care *especially Dee, Lin, Robert, and Linda*. We also pray for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For this congregation and the South Sudanese Congregation. Make all of us signs of your love and forgiveness in this community and in the world. Help Pastor Philip and Pastor Roger to guide us with the Holy Spirit, to grow in our love for one another as your Son has taught us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

In thanksgiving for all the faithful witnesses who put on the Lord Jesus Christ. Keep us faithful until the day we rejoice in your majesty with them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting the power of Christ and the gifts of the Spirit.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

"Blessed Be the Name"

ELW 797

**Blessed be the name,
blessed be the name,
blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Blessed be the name,
blessed be the name,
blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Believe!**

Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed be the name, Jesus' name.
Believe!
Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed be the name, Jesus' name.

Let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus,
let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Believe!
Alleluia, alleluia.
Let us go to Jesus in heav'n.
Believe!
Alleluia, alleluia.
Let us go to Jesus in heav'n.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

Thank the Lord and sing his praise;
tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let ev'ryone who seeks the Lord
rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He recalls his promises
and leads his people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *God of life,*
C you give us these gifts of the earth, these resources of our life and our labor. Take them, offered in great thanksgiving, and use them to set a table that will heal the whole creation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Light. Amen!

***DIALOGUE**

P *The Lord be with you.*
C And also with you.
P *Lift up your hearts.*
C We lift them to the Lord.
P *Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*
C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***PREFACE**

P *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. Fulfilling the promise of the resurrection, you pour out the fire of your Spirit, uniting in one body people of every nation and tongue. And so, with Mary Magdalene and Peter and all the witnesses of the resurrection, with earth and sea and all their creatures, and with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

P *In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

*Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.*

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.*

G **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!

***INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P *Speak to us, O Lord, in the breaking of the bread, and make us one with you.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *Holy and compassionate God,*

G **in bread and wine you give us gifts that form us to be humble and courageous. May your words come to life in our serving and in our witness, that we might speak a living voice of healing and justice to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our rock and our redeemer. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *God, creator of all things, speaking reformation into being;
Jesus Christ, savior of the world, raising the dead;
Holy Spirit, living voice, calling and enlightening the church:
Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.*

G **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

“Church On Fire”

The Holy Spirit is here
And His power is real
Anything can happen
And it probably will
Something very good
Something good
Is going on around here

There's a light that shines
To make the dark disappear
A power at work
But there's nothing to fear

**Something very good
Something good
Is going on around here**

**This is a church on fire
This is the Holy Spirit flame
We have a burning desire
To lift up Jesus' name**

**Let fire burn in ev'ry heart
To light the way defeat the dark
Let the flame of love burn higher
This is a church
This is a church on fire**