



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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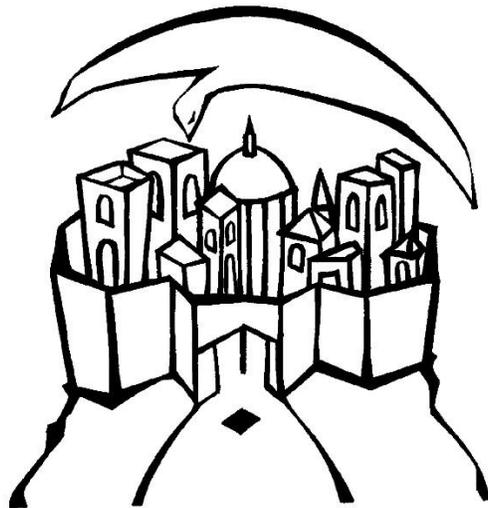
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Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

July 4, 2021

ELW Holy Communion, Setting Eight

Jesus does great deeds of power and gives his disciples authority over demons. Yet none of this power is unilateral; it all must be received by faith. Jesus asks his disciples to go out without money or supplies, so that they will be dependent on how others receive them. When we are sent from the assembly to witness and to heal, we are asked to be vulnerable, to be dependent on the reception of others. The Spirit always operates in the “between”: between Jesus and his Abba, between Jesus and us, between you and me, between us and those to whom we are sent.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping on-line with us today! Here at Grace Lutheran we believe God is active in your life. Even you being here now is testament of God’s calling and leading in your heart, which you have faithfully heeded. So we welcome you, and pray that today you will be nurtured and that the gifts that God has graciously given you will be stirred for the sake of God’s mission in the world.

GATHERING

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

As we are gathered while still apart, may we see evermore clearly the connection we share over time and space through the gracious gift of baptism, for which we give thanks.

For baptism is the physical symbol of what God does for us in our lives. The act of baptism itself holds no power but it is the presence of God in and through these waters that gives us life. While the water remains but ordinary water, it becomes for us a sign of God's wondrous love that reaches out to us, encapsulates us, and refreshes, revitalizes, and renews us as God's beloved people full of value, worth, and purpose.

And so those of you with water in front you, you may dip your fingers in the water. See how fluid it is around your skin. Feel how it cools and energizes. Notice how it calms your senses and helps you in your awareness of God with you and around you.

Now if you're willing, use the water to mark your foreheads with a sign of the cross. Allow God's presence fill your heart and open your ears to hear God's Word for us this day, through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG: Lord, You Give the Great Commission (#579)

GREETING

The inviting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the empowering love of God, and the supporting fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE (p. 184)

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 185)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of grace and mercy, you call us to proclaim to your healing and faithfully fulfill your mission of love in the world and to all its inhabitants. Humble our desire for power and status, and keep our eyes fixed on you as you reveal to us your realm of peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 2:1-5

A reading from Ezekiel.

In 597 BCE, the priest Ezekiel was removed into exile in Babylon. While there, he received a vision of God appearing majestically on a chariot throne. Today's reading recounts God's commissioning of Ezekiel during this vision. The prophet is to speak God's word to a people unwilling to hear.

¹[A voice] said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you.²And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me.

³He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day.

⁴The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord God." ⁵Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 123

¹To you I lift up my eyes,
to you enthroned in the heavens.

²**As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,**

so our eyes look to you, O LORD our God, until you show us your mercy.

³Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy,
for we have had more than enough of contempt,

⁴**too much of the scorn of the indolent rich,
and of the derision of the proud.**

SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 12:2-10

A reading from 2 Corinthians.

Christians do not boast of their own accomplishments. Rather, Christian boasting focuses attention on how the power of Christ is present in our lives, especially in times of weakness and vulnerability. No matter what our circumstances in life, Christ's grace is sufficient for us.

²I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. ⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 188)

GOSPEL: Mark 6:1-13

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

At home and abroad, Jesus and his disciples encounter resistance as they seek to proclaim God's word and relieve affliction.

¹[Jesus] came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ²On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." ⁵And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." ¹²So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, soften our hearts in our stubbornness, open our eyes in our blindness, and humble our very selves in our stubbornness to receive your Word for us this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As some of you know, when I was in seminary, some classmates and I were able to travel to Peru for a cross cultural experience that was part of our curriculum. At this point in my life, I hadn't travelled much at all, in fact just going to Saskatoon for seminary was like a cross cultural experience for me. So in Peru, I was in total tourist mode, taking pictures of everything, buying dumb little souvenirs at every shop, and eating the local cuisine with such vigor as though it were my last meal. It's kind of embarrassing now that I think about it.

But one of my classmates was a much more experienced traveller and she gave me a nickel's worth of free advice. She said that we all should have Canadian flags visible on our person as while it's obvious that we're not from around there, we would at least be seen as coming from a country that has a reputation of being "nice," which might help with our dealings with others. And so we did. I bought this Canadian flag luggage tag thing and stuck in on my backpack. I don't know if it worked or not, but none of us were mugged and I was only offered to buy some weed like once. And even then, the guy kept saying that he had the good stuff and I was like, "dude, I'm from BC" while I flashed him the Canadian flag on my bag and he totally backed off in an almost sheepish and apologetic way. I guess Canada, particularly BC, has a reputation of being more than just "nice."

So that is the funny thing about reputations, they can change how you see others or how you're seen by others. It may determine how you treat and how you're treated. It perhaps informs us of the acceptance levels both for yourself and of others.

This is what we see in today's gospel lesson, where Jesus goes back to his hometown where the reputation that he garnered growing up never changed in the eyes of those still living there. The reaction to this reputation in fact was so strong that the text tells us that he was powerless to do any good.

This is Jesus, the guy that in just the preceding chapters of this gospel that we had read in the past few weeks, calmed the storm, healed the hemorrhaging woman, resurrected the daughter of a synagogue leader, and taught a wisdom hitherto undreamt of, and he was made to be powerless.

The people knew of all these deeds of power too, they were even talking about it but they were also reminded that this was just Jesus, you know, young Jesus from around the block, the kid whose dad used to build our tables and chairs, whose mom gave birth to him awfully soon after she was married, and whose siblings he just denied publically because they wanted to bring him home. That was his reputation. One that drained the power from the most powerful, one that took the wisdom out of his wise words, one that removed the grace and love from Jesus' gracious acts of unending love.

It's remarkable how a reputation could make or break us.

It's remarkable how a reputation could change our belief or view of others.

It's remarkable how a reputation could be more important than the actual person.

And, unfortunately, this is how our world is shaped. This is how we judge people, by what we hear of them over our actual experience with them. This is how we attribute value and worth, by looking at what was rather than what could be. This isn't always a bad thing, mind you. It isn't always a bad thing to be prepared a bit for what someone might be like. I mean, it did give me a funny story to tell about my experience in Peru, at least.

But the problem is when that reputation is all that you see, good or bad. The problem is when the judgements that were made from that reputation become final and nothing can change it. No kind of recourse, rehabilitation, or reconciliation seem to matter as that person is that person to you always.

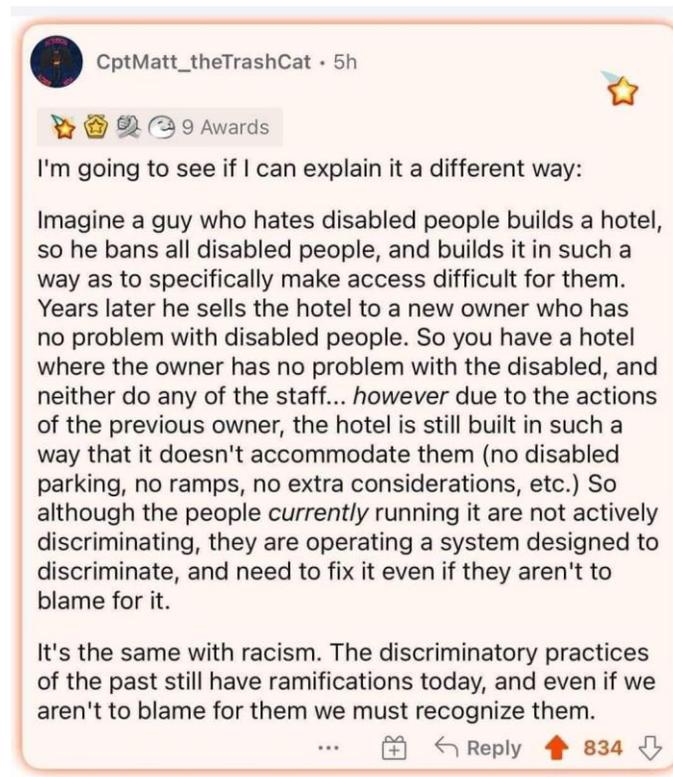
I'm not saying that we should erase everything we know of others all the time, or not think that our past has any repercussions. I'm just saying that this kind of prejudice is where racism comes from. And we can't deny that racism is alive and well in this country and around the world.

I know, I know, "sigh, racism again." But as a racialized person it's hard for me to not think about it. It's hard for me not to wrestle with my own mixed up roots of having been born in Canada but not really looking "Canadian" as I've been told multiple times. And seeing how it was Canada Day just this past week, just after so many unmarked graves of young Indigenous people who were victims of the residential school system were found, I start to wonder if I would have the same pride and honour in displaying my Canadian heritage to the world. While I haven't spoken to anyone abroad about this, I am curious as to how Canadian reputation

might change in light of all this. And you might think, well, that's not fair if it does. What happened back then doesn't really reflect on who we are now, why should we be blamed and held accountable for what they did?

Well, we shouldn't. But we should be blamed and held accountable for what we continue to do, or not do, now.

Perhaps it's summed up best by something I saw on Facebook. I saved it because I liked it so much, which I'm glad I did, because now I can just show it to you:



So that's what I see in Canada. Our shady history is finally coming to light after being so watered down for so long, and it's time for us now to change the racist systems of the past to ensure that our future can be welcoming and equitable for all.

But we know it won't be easy to change this reputation this country might have on the world stage. It won't be easy for us to change the reputation we've had of our Indigenous siblings and others that might not "look Canadian enough" for so long because of our western education books and upbringing, at least that ones that I've had growing up. It won't be easy for us to wipe clean that slate and see the value and worth that all people have, not because of their past or reputation, but because of who they are now as God's beloved people, just as we are God's beloved people, living together and trying to navigate life, community, and the contribution that we all make to the greater good.

See just as the disciples were called to continue the work of Jesus as he was found to be unable to do much because of the unfair reputation people had of him, so are we called to carry on the work of Jesus in our world. This world that hasn't held Jesus in a very good light for various reasons, this world that has such a history of violence and segregation, this world that continues to be full of potential because it is a world that God so dearly loves. My friends, this

is what we are called to do, and the work is not to condemn because of past mistakes, but to graciously love into reconciliation, restoration, and God's salvation all people of all walks, revealing and reminding us all of our value and worth instilled in us by God.

So as we continue in this season after Pentecost in our journey towards truth and reconciliation, may we hold up our human brothers and sisters above all false segregations, sinfully created systems designed to oppress, and whatever reputation may precede them, that we might be able to learn to love, respect, and honour each other in the name of Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: We All Are One in Mission (#576)

CREED

With all of God's people, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called to be in mission with each other, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "have mercy upon us, O Lord," and you may respond with hear our prayer. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, our eyes are lifted to you in awe and wonder, and you continue to shower us in your grace. Remind us of the value you give to us and to all people, that we be able to live together in harmony and mutual respect. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, you sit enthroned in the heavens, granting us wisdom around your grace and love. May this wisdom be reflected in our ministry and service, proclaiming your gospel to all the world. We pray this for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Benediction Lutheran Church in Delta and their pastor Thomas Keeley; and King of Life Lutheran Church in Coquitlam and their interim pastor Dorothy Chu. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, our eyes look to you in appreciation of the goodness you give us in all of creation. Its beauty and wonder are much more than we deserve, and it is our hope that we are able to properly care for all that you have entrusted to us that your name continue to be glorified through all that you have made. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, we look to you for mercy and healing throughout these lands. We have not acted justly toward your people and have hoarded out of greed and selfishness. Make apparent to all your ways of grace and love, and teach us to live in peace and equality. We pray especially for those whom we've sponsored to come into our country and away from harm: Solyana Amanuel; and Maেকে Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that they be able to travel here soon. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, your mercy is great and you send us your healing and support. May your love for us be always apparent, especially on those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that none would feel unvalued and without worth. Especially we pray for Paula; Marie; Diana; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; William; those who have contracted or been affected by COVID-19; and those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, you save us from the scorn and derision of our enemies and adversaries, and welcome us into eternity with you and all the saints of all times and places. May our connection with you and them continually inform us of the worth you give to all people, every man, woman, and child, that our actions and service to all people be pleasing to you. Have mercy upon us, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the intrinsic value and worth you give, instilled in us by Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERATORY HYMN: We Come to the Hungry Feast (#479)

OFFERING PRAYER

God our divine giver, all that we have is a gift from you. May this food we have before us serve as a reminder of your grace, mercy, and blessing, that we might all lean on you for strength and providence, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

MEAL

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, Holy God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us all our calling in our lives as your children, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 190)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

O Lord, we lift our eyes to you as you are enthroned in the highest heaven in glory and splendor. By ourselves we are sinners in need of grace, but by your mercy you lift us up and rename us as your children. And you send to us Jesus, your Son, to show us just how wide and vast your love is.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took some bread, gave thanks, and shared it saying, “take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

And after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and shared that 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.”

It is with this food that we see God’s providence and care, even as we declare this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

To you, O merciful God, be all honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Saviour and brother, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

Gathered together as one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that God loves and values you.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN: Lamb of God (p. 191)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy and merciful God, we give you thanks for instilling in us your truth and love, that we can look forward to the end of this pandemic with confidence that you will continue to lead and guide us by your grace through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May the mercy of God hold you and keep you, the love of Christ shine on you and be gracious unto you, the power of the Spirit be favourable and bring you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: Spirit of Gentleness (#396)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, know that you are seen and loved.

Thanks be to God.