



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost October 17, 2021 ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten

Today's gospel starts with disciples obsessing over who will be closest to Jesus, leading to Jesus teaching his followers about God's take on importance and power. Here Jesus makes it explicit that the reversal of values in God's community is a direct challenge to the values of the dominant culture, where wielding power over others is what makes you great. When we pray "your kingdom come" we are praying for an end to tyranny and oppression. We pray this gathered around the cross, a sign of great shame transformed to be the sign of great honor and service.

A warm welcome to those who are here worshipping in-person and 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.

Grace Lutheran worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hən̓q̓əmiñəm (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather together physically and online in the name of God Sovereign, Saviour, and Spirit, to humbly worship and be opened to the leading of God's love and grace.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said (#667) verses 1,2,4

GREETING

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

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

We give you thanks and praise, O God, that you have called us to this place to hear the promise of your holy Word, to be immersed in the font of your grace, and to drink the cup of your blessing. Draw us deeper into your presence and send us out to love and serve, for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 53:4-12

A reading from Isaiah.

This reading is from the last of four passages in Isaiah that are often called "servant songs." Christians are probably most familiar with this servant song. In light of Christian faith, the servant's healing ministry and redemptive suffering are understood to be fulfilled in the life and death of Christ.

⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.

⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away.
Who could have imagined his future?
For he was cut off from the land of the living,

stricken for the transgression of my people.

⁹They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 91:9-16

⁹Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,

¹⁰**no evil will befall you,
nor shall affliction come near your dwelling.**

¹¹For God will give the angels charge over you,
to guard you in all your ways.

¹²**Upon their hands they will bear you up,
lest you strike your foot against a stone.**

¹³You will tread upon the lion cub and viper;
you will trample down the lion and the serpent.

¹⁴**I will deliver those who cling to me;
I will uphold them, because they know my name.**

¹⁵They will call me, and I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble; I will rescue and honour them.

¹⁶**With long life will I satisfy them,
and show them my salvation.**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:1-10

A reading from Hebrews.

Using imagery from scripture and from Jewish worship practices, Jesus is presented as the great high priest who was obedient to God's saving plan. Through his suffering and death he has become the source of eternal salvation.

¹Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. ²He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and

wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; ³and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. ⁴And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

⁵So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

⁶as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

⁷In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. ⁸Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; ⁹and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, ¹⁰having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Mark 10:35-45

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the way to Jerusalem the disciples ask Jesus to grant them seats of honor. Jesus responds by announcing that he and his followers will “rule” through self-giving service.

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷And they said to him, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” ³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

³⁹They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

O Lord, by the power of your Spirit, lift us up into your presence that we be able to hear the promise of your word and know the joy of your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Anyone here get road rage? I'd like to think that I don't, but if I'm honest, some of my pet peeves have to do with driving with other drivers on the road. You know, drivers that drive too fast or too slow for the conditions, drivers that just can't figure out how 4-way stop signs work, drivers that take their kids to school so close to the bell that makes traffic awful at the exact time when I'm dropping off my kids.

It's not road rage per se, but it's a definite annoyance and a hair-pulling event for me when some other driver on the road makes it perfectly clear that they have no idea what they're doing. Ok, maybe it's a bit of road rage, but at least I'm not running people off the road or getting out of my car with a baseball bat or anything like that. I usually just mutter under my breath or maybe point a digit or two up in the air... actually it's mostly the muttering... yeah I just mutter.

But what is it about drivers that road rage is even a thing? Is where we're going to that important that we can get so mad to the point of violence at those who get in our way? Is the road so very precious to us that anyone who defiles its rules and regulations need to taste our own unique brand of street justice? Are we so very special that everyone else needs to cater to our every whim and want?

Well, no to all of those, but somehow road rage still happens. Curious, isn't it?

I guess it's curious for me until I heard from Dr. Phil I think it was, explaining what causes this kind of road rage. Dr. Phil (or whoever it was) said that when we're driving, we're in control of everything. The music, our speed, what lane we're in, we're the boss and we have ultimate power. But when something happens, like someone cuts us off or drives too slow or can't even figure out that it's not their turn to leave the stop sign yet, then that power is taken away from us. We are stripped of our authority and are reminded that actually, we're not actually all-powerful like we thought. And that loss of power could send us over the deep end.

It would seem that the only solution for road rage then is for each of us to have our own private road to and from wherever we're going. Either that or get rid of the roads altogether. Or maybe, we just have to get rid of the other drivers. You know, take away all that compete with us for our power. Remove anything that might stand in our way. Or maybe get real chummy with whoever is in charge, and then perhaps maybe we can have everything go our way.

I wonder if this is the thinking that James and John had in today's gospel lesson. They go and ask Jesus straight up if they can get the most coveted places of honour, one at his left and one at his right. And I'll be honest, every time I read this, all I can think about is how badly I want to call those two out for their foolishness and greed. I mean, even if we just look at this particular passage on its own, we can totally hear the arrogance and the entitlement oozing from these two brothers. But if we look at the wider context, we would remember that Jesus had already explained to them how the first will be last and the last be first, and that the disciples had already been chastised by Jesus for arguing who among them was the greatest, *and* the fact that this is the third time that Jesus told them how the Messiah isn't the grand military leader they expected to save their people from oppression but rather a humble servant to many. This

passage on its own makes these sons of Zebedee look dumb, but looking at the greater context shows us how they're actually idiots.

I mean, who did they think they were? How did they have the nerve to assume that Jesus would choose them over the other 10? Why couldn't they just understand what Jesus was saying about humility and service?

Well, it's that power thing again. Not just their own personal power, not this time at least. But they were concerned about the power of their people, their nation, their God. We're all somewhat familiar with the history of Israel before Jesus showed up on the scene, right? I mean we know that they've been revealed to be the chosen people of God, but they had a rough go with slavery, wandering the wilderness, and being exiled a couple times in there. And we also know that Jesus is the promised Messiah, come to save them from their plight of current Roman occupation in their land.

At least, that's what they were led to believe. That is what they thought. That is what they looked forward to in regaining that power they heard they were supposed to have all this time but it kept getting stripped away... by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, and now the Romans. That sounds frustrating.

It sounds like if I were to get in my car, fight traffic to take the kids to school, battle the other parents for a parking spot, then have a headache trying to leave that spot with all the parents dropping their kids off in the middle of the road, and then making my way to Metrotown for a little light Christmas shopping and having to battle *those* drivers for parking spots, right of ways, and even the ability to move forward. That would be a road rager's nightmare.

And that is basically what Israel went through. They just wanted relief from their enemies. They wanted release from hardship. They wanted redemption from all that oppressed them.

So when this guy Jesus came, and confirmed to them that he was the promised Messiah, hot dog that would be good news. Finally, the open road for Israel at last. And the best thing to do is cozy up with this Messiah to ensure that you'll be on easy street for the rest of your foreseeable future.

So I guess I can't really blame James and John for this request (more like demand). And I can't blame the rest of the disciples for being angry that they didn't call dibs first. I can't blame anyone for just not being able to get what on earth Jesus meant by greatness defined by service, which is what he told his disciples in response to this request/demand.

I mean service doesn't give us control, it gives those we're serving control. Service doesn't give us power, we are submitting to those in power. Service doesn't make us great, it just shows us how not great we are. What could Jesus have meant here?

Well, Jesus is saying that greatness isn't found in power, so we can stop doing whatever it takes to get it. He is saying that God's chosen people aren't meant to be rulers so there's no need to lord it over others. He is saying that our control or lack thereof has nothing to do with our position in God's kingdom, God's family, God's love.

Rather, God chooses to love us regardless of how much power or authority we have. God chooses to save no matter how much or little control we have over our lives and the lives of others. God chooses to forgive us even when our worst road rage might blind us from the truth of God's gracious promises to us and to all people.

And while this might sound like that hope of an open road free of traffic and bad drivers is being taken away, I think it is actually freeing us, liberating us from the controlling need to control things and strengthening us and empowering us to humbly serve God and each other. Not because it will give us power and make us great, but because we have encountered the living Christ who showed us by example just how great God's love is.

So you see, true greatness isn't found in being better than rest, having power over others, or being able to control things that clearly aren't ours to control. But true greatness is found in the grace of God, openly given to us by God's own volition, humbling us from our privilege and entitlement, and revealing to us the width and breadth of God's love for us all and reminding us that we are made worthy by God to serve and to be served, living together with one another as the one body of Christ.

In this season after Pentecost, may we be humbled by God's grace shown to us, that we might freely and wholeheartedly serve God and neighbour for the good of the world in need. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Build Us Up, Lord (#670)

CREED

With the whole 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 into humble service to God and neighbour, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “by your humbling mercy, O God,” and you all may respond with **hear our prayer**. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord Most High, you are our refuge and habitation. In you, we needn't fear, but we are given the faith to know that you will remain our God and we your children forever. Instill in us the wonders of your grace, and reassure us always of your steadfast love. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you let no evil or affliction befall us, and you protect us from the lies and deceptions of the world. May the life of the church always reflect your truths of grace and love, that we might all learn to live with each other as the one body of Christ. We pray especially for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Greg, assistant to the bishop Kathy, and national bishop Susan, as well as the delegates for our upcoming Synod Convention; and for our companion congregations of the BC Synod and beyond. In particular, we pray for First Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Rebekah Swanson; and for the Lutheran Campus Ministries across Canada. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you have made for us a planet to dwell in and you have filled it with beauty and wonder. Help us in our care for your creation and all creatures, and sustain the health and wellbeing of all that you have made. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you guard us in all our ways but often violence and turmoil strike us as we go astray. Be with all politicians and world leaders and grant them your wisdom as we all strive toward peace. We pray also for those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; that they may enter into this country soon and safely. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you deliver us and uphold us, and you answer us when we call. Be especially with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely or in trouble, and rescue them from their afflictions. In particular we pray for Beulah; Diana; Marie; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bev and family; Paula; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; Charlotte; those who have been affected by COVID-19; and all who we name aloud or quietly at this time...
By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you grant us salvation and you satisfy us with your promise of eternal life with you and all the saints. Remind us always of their lives of faith, that they continually inform us and guide us in living ours. By your humbling mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love and grace, revealed to us by Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shows us your ways of steadfast love and everlasting life.

For on the night that he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal where he took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it, and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they ate, he took the 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 in this bread and cup that we remember our journey through your love, even as we declare the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

All honour and glory be to you, O God, for your unending grace and mercy, humbling us to serve as you served and love as you loved, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into humble service 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

Take and eat, God's grace is for all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)
Christ, Be Our Light (#715)
Lord, Be Glorified (#744)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, you have fed us and nourished us with your truth and promises, and you bring us to see you in your Word more clearly. Continue to humble us in our service, that we might be an accurate reflection of your grace in the world, through Jesus our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Sovereign deliver you and protect you,
God our Saviour answer you when you call,
God our Spirit satisfy you with life and salvation, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: On Eagle's Wings (#787)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, humbly serve God and neighbour.

Thanks be to God.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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