



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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**Thanksgiving Sunday
(Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost)
October 9, 2022
ELW Holy Communion, Setting Ten**

It's a miracle! Multiple miracles! The waters of holy baptism have healed us. The body and blood of Jesus in holy communion have made us clean. We have died with Christ and been raised with him. For all this we have returned to offer thanks. From this place we are sent on our way rejoicing to share the good news.

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 hən̓q̓əmiñəm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship to give thanks to the Lord with our whole hearts. For the works of God are great, majestic and full of splendor and God's righteousness endures forever. We remember the wondrous and gracious compassion given to us through the providence and power of God.

May our worship be seen as faithful, honouring the God we serve, whose justice, truth, and equity stand forever. And may the holy and awesome name of God be praised. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Great Is Thy Faithfulness (#733)

GREETING

May the life-altering grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the paradigm-shifting love of God, and the love-inducing fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of salvation, you are the source of wisdom and joy. Your grace and mercy endure forever, and your steadfast love continues to heal and save. Give us thankful hearts and the joyful attitudes that allow us to see you and your righteous works in and around the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c

A reading from 2 Kings.

Naaman, a Syrian general, suffers from leprosy. In this passage Elisha miraculously cures his illness, but only after Naaman realizes, with the help of his servants, that he also needs healing for his pride. This foreign general then acknowledges the sovereignty of the God of Israel.

¹Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. ²Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. ³She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." ⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me."

⁸But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel." ⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. ¹⁰Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." ¹¹But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and

stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! ¹²Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage. ¹³But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean'?" ¹⁴So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

^{15a-c}Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 111

¹Hallelujah! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart,
in the assembly of the upright, in the congregation.

²**Great are your works, O LORD,
pondered by all who delight in them.**

³Majesty and splendor mark your deeds,
and your righteousness endures forever.

⁴**You cause your wonders to be remembered;
you are gracious and full of compassion.**

⁵You give food to those who fear you,
remembering forever your covenant.

⁶**You have shown your people the power of your works
in giving them the lands of the nations.**

⁷The works of your hands are faithfulness and justice;
all of your precepts are sure.

⁸**They stand fast forever and ever,
because they are done in truth and equity.**

⁹You sent redemption to your people and commanded your covenant forever;
holy and awesome is your name.

¹⁰**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who practice this have a good understanding. God's praise endures forever.**

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 2:8-15

A reading from 2 Timothy.

Though Paul is chained as a prisoner, the word of God is never shackled or confined. Timothy is encouraged to proclaim that word of freedom in an honest and upright life as well as in his teaching and preaching.

⁸Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, ⁹for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. ¹⁰Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. ¹¹The saying is sure:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

¹²if we endure, we will also reign with him;
if we deny him, he will also deny us;
¹³if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

¹⁴Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. ¹⁵Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Luke 17:11-19

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus' mission includes making people clean again. Unexpectedly, a Samaritan healed of leprosy becomes a model for those who would praise and worship God and give thanks for God's mercy.

¹¹On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" ¹⁴When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?" ¹⁸Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Sermon for Pentecost 18 Thanksgiving | October 9, 2022

Luke 17:11-19

Holy God, set us free by your Word let loose in the world. By the power of your Holy Spirit change us with the mindset of unashamed worthiness in your name, that we might joyfully reflect your love in all that we do, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

I remember a story that I heard a number of years ago that always stuck with me. I might have shared it with a few of you in the past, as I think it really provides insight on an important life truth. The story is about these two people arguing about how one of them claimed to be a ghost, while the other denied it. They argued and argued but they couldn't convince each other to change their minds about what is real and what isn't. In a fit, the second person tries to just end the argument then and there with a very direct question, "what proof do you need

that will convince you that you aren't a ghost?" And the reply was "Because ghosts don't bleed, if I am cut, I won't bleed." So the second person gladly gets a blade and pricks their seemingly misguided friend on the finger, which drew out some blood. Then the first person, in shock, says, "Oh will you look at that, ghosts *do* bleed after all!"

Now the point of the story isn't to wonder whether the first person was actually a ghost or not, they could be or they couldn't be. The point is how their being a ghost was an absolute truth in their mind, and everything else revolved and even evolved around that. Anything that remotely supported the notion became substantiating evidence of fact, and anything even slightly against became lies from Satan. The rules change to fit that particular narrative, so any argument would be futile as nothing could shake this immovable absolute. I don't know about the rest of you, but that sounds an awful lot like every single argument that I've had with my spouse.

But seriously, you might know people who hold onto these absolute truths. Or perhaps you do yourself. There isn't anything wrong with believing in an absolute truth, but we should be aware of how such absolutes change us as we begin to, like everything else, revolve and evolve around that truth in support of it. So while having that belief in itself isn't wrong, but what you become because of that belief might be.

Most of the time it can be harmless, like who you believe to be best sports team, band, or streaming service. You have your preference and it doesn't really affect anyone else but you. Or sometimes it can get a little heated, like when we start talking about things that people care about a bit more, like the classic Apple vs Android or Mac vs PC or even Ford vs Chrysler or Toyota vs Honda. People like their brands and are almost identified by them which could make for some lively debates. Still there are other times when holding to an absolute truth in your opinion can be downright dangerous, like when you have an idea of what ethnicity or religion or even political party these days is the best, which leads you to put down others who don't belong to your same demographic.

Whatever it is, these absolutes in our lives are what actually shape and form us, they shape how we interpret the world and lead us to do what we do, say what we say, and think what we think. Again, this isn't a good or bad thing, it's just a thing.

I was thinking about this "absolute truths" mentality when I was reading the texts for this week, particularly the gospel out of Luke, as I feel like I spotted something that relates that I never spotted before. Or I maybe I did spot it before, and just conveniently forgot about it to have "new" material for this sermon. But we're familiar with this story, while it isn't technically the Thanksgiving text for this Lectionary year C that we're in, it's the text for today, the 18th Sunday after Pentecost. And incidentally, it's also the same gospel lesson that we get for Thanksgiving out of Lectionary year A. Either case, I'm sure we heard about these 10 lepers who called out for help and Jesus being all Jesus heals them, but only one comes back to even acknowledge it, much to Jesus' chagrin.

And after Jesus sort of complains about how the other 9 ex-lepers didn't even bother to come back, he says something peculiar to the one that did. Who, by the way, was a Samaritan, Luke thought it important to mention specifically. Jesus says, any guesses? "Your faith has made you well."

His faith, huh? That actually sounds pretty cool. You mean to tell me, Jesus, that faith can actually heal leprosy? That's awesome because I've been fighting this bout of eczema for a while so maybe a little bit of faith can help me with that. I mean if a Samaritan leper, considered unclean by all the religious authorities of the time, could have the faith to make him better, I'm pretty sure that my faith as a Lutheran pastor would blow his out of the water. You know, that water where I planted that tree from last week's texts when my faith helped me with some light landscaping. Either case, however this faith thing can enhance our lives, I'm all for it and I'm ready to cash in.

I mean, isn't that that is the absolute here? Jesus states that the Samaritan's faith healed him so I guess that means that if we have enough faith, our illnesses would be cured. This Samaritan leper obviously had the faith to at least come back to Jesus to thank him for it, so there has to be some sort of truth to it. Faith cures diseases. Faith clears up our ailments and returns us back to wholeness. Faith protects us from getting sick.

Except... when it doesn't.

How many of us have prayed for our sick loved ones but they stayed sick anyway? How many of us believed that we would be protected from COVID? How many of us put our faith in God's healing, only for us to be disappointed with illness after illness and death after death?

No, it's clear by our own experience that faith doesn't heal, so what does Jesus mean? Does he mean that the Samaritan's gratitude healed him? I can't see that being true either as the other 9 weren't all that grateful, or at least they didn't show it, but they were still healed. Did Jesus mean that the Samaritan's heritage healed him? Probably not, as well... he was a Samaritan. So what did Jesus mean?

I'm sure that faith did have something to do with it, but I think the confusion comes from what Jesus means by "well". Sure, the Samaritan's faith made him well, but what is well?

I think the answer is in the different attitudes of the 10. The one that came back understood gratitude, and not just that, but understood in whom that gratitude belongs. You see, this man wasn't thankful because he was healed, but it was because he understood who healed him that he was thankful.

Because that healing was absolute. All 10 received it. It was not dependant on their attitudes, gritudes, or faith. But it was given because of another absolute, which is that God is good. God is good whether you believe it or not. And God will continue to do good whether your paradigm of the world allows you to see it or not.

So the Samaritan being well isn't about his clear skin, but his clear mind and outlook on God present in the world. His faith didn't put him in God's salvation but allowed him to know that God's love for even him was true. His knowledge and acknowledgement of an absolutely good God is what brought him into thankfulness and joy, granting him the peace that surpasses all understanding and the life that truly is life.

See these beliefs that the Samaritan leper had changed him, even though he was an outcast. These absolute truths that he held onto allowed him the gratitude and joy that comes from

seeing God in the world. This faith is what made him well, well in the sense that he knows he is worthy, he is valued, he is loved.

And so for the rest of us, we can be thankful when good things happen to us, of course. We can show gratitude when we are given nice things. We can even believe that we get good when we are good. But the true thanksgiving comes from seeing God in the world. Our true healing comes from the knowledge and acknowledgment that we are God's beloved children. Us being truly well comes from our faith in the Alpha and Omega God, the beginning and the end, whose grace and mercy are boundless and endures forever. This is what changes us, this is where we find wholeness, this is the absolute that recreates us as faithful people of God.

This Thanksgiving weekend, may we not just see the things that we can be thankful for in our lives, but also acknowledge the absolute goodness of God, granting us overflowing grace and steadfast peace that fill our hearts with gratitude, now and always. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Light Dawns on a Weary World (#726)

CREED (p. 104)

With all people healed by God's grace, 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

Led into thanksgiving and joy, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, in your enduring mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Lord, we give thanks to you with our whole hearts as you join us together as one. Instill in us appreciative hearts, and may our eyes be fixed on you. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Lord, your works are great and your deeds are righteous, full of majesty and splendor. Fill our ministries with your wonders that your gracious compassion be remembered by all whom we encounter. Especially we pray for our neighbouring faith communities; our partner Anglican Church of Canada; our bishop Kathy, assistant to the bishop Rebekah, and national bishop Susan; and our companion congregations of the BC Synod. In particular, we pray for Dunbar Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their pastor Thomas Keeley; and for our Synod staff: Kimberly and Susana. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, you made a covenant with us your people and you have fulfilled it with the wonders of all that you have made. Help us in our stewardship of this planet that you have entrusted to us, and may all who dwell in it appreciate its beauty and resources. We pray especially for all the areas of the world that are facing harsh weather and natural disasters, that they find safety and security in the midst of strife. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, there is power in your works and your justice runs across the lands of the nations. Give wisdom to all world leaders and politicians, that all people of influence might lead with graciousness and compassion. We pray for all countries and areas that live under the threat of war, violence, and turmoil, that your strength and faithfulness might bring peace to all people. We also pray for those who we've sponsored to enter into our country: Solyana Amanuel; and Maekele Kiflue, Selam Haile, and their children, that their journey might begin soon. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, your redemptive love is equitable and stands fast forever, and we rest in your healing and truth. Be with all among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that your blessings continue to bring joy in all our lives. We pray especially for Paula; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Diana; Bev and family; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Cindy; Linda; William; Chris; Amika; Jack; Walter; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, your covenant of redemption endures forever and you grant us the wisdom to understand it, joining us with all the saints to praise your name always. Remind us always of the lives of the faithful, that they continually serve as examples for us as we live together in community. Lord, in your enduring mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your grace and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PEACE (p. 106)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

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, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who brings to us healing and peace and lifts us up to join with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 207)

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Lord God of might and majesty, we praise you for all that you have done: in saving us with your redemptive grace, in welcoming us by your everlasting mercy, and in healing us with your steadfast love. Instill in our hearts the truth of your joy and peace, that we might be changed in seeing the world through your eyes of compassion and justice, led by the heart of Jesus our Lord.

Who, on the night of his betrayal, sat with his friends for a meal where he took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it with them saying, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And then after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from 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 food that we know healing and peace, together declaring the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Be present at this table. Bless this food. Bring your Spirit among us, that your enduring grace and mercy be revealed in all that we do, all that we are, and all that we hope for and believe. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, as one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered together to live in community 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 the blessing of God's love.
Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)

O Christ, Your Heart, Compassionate (#722)

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (#674)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we again give you thanks for feeding us and nourishing us with this heavenly food, made possible by your Word and promises. Strengthen us by your love, that we might, with thankful hearts, serve you and neighbour faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God our Creator watch over us and all nations,
God the Christ restore us, body and soul,
God as Counsellor lead us into faithfulness and joy, moving us in our thankfulness, now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (#631)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, practice gratitude and faith.
Thanks be to God.

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