



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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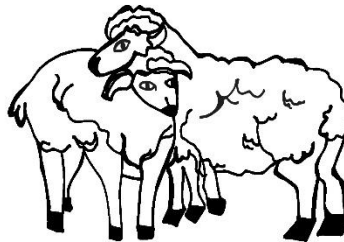
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Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

July 21, 2024

WOV Holy Communion, Setting Five: Bread of Life

Mark's gospel makes clear how great is the press of the crowd, with its countless needs to be met, on Jesus and his disciples. Yet in today's gospel Jesus advises his disciples to get away and rest, to take care of themselves. Sometimes we think that when others are in great need we shouldn't think of ourselves at all; but Jesus also honors the caregivers' need. We are sent from Christ's table to care for others and for ourselves.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

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

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship of the Lord our shepherd, in whom we shall not want. For God cares for us and leads us into green pastures beside still waters, reviving our souls as we are guided along right pathways. Even in these troubled times we needn't fear, for God is with us, God comforts us, and God anoints us with goodness and mercy, revealing to us the welcome that we share in God's community and kingdom, where we will praise God's name forever. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Lord, Speak to Us, That We May Speak (#676)

GREETING

The comforting grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the healing love of God, and the restoring fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

HYMN OF PRAISE: Glory to God (WOV p. 29)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, you invite and welcome us to be the sheep of your pasture, where you care for us, feed us, and lead us on paths of righteousness. Strengthen us by your presence, and raise us up to be your people who can in turn reveal your love and grace to all, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from Jeremiah.

Jeremiah prophesied before the exile in 587 BCE. In this passage, he uses the metaphor of a shepherd to describe the bad kings who have scattered the "flock" of Israel. God promises to gather the flock and to raise up a new king from David's line to save Israel and Judah.

¹ Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the LORD.

² Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD. ³ Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴ I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall not fear any longer, or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the LORD.

⁵ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not be in want.

²**He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

³He revives my soul
and guides me along right pathways for his name's sake.

⁴**Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

⁶**Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: Ephesians 2:11-22

A reading from Ephesians.

The author of this letter reminds his audience that originally they were not part of God's chosen people. Through Jesus' death, however, they are included in God's household of faith, whose cornerstone is Jesus Christ.

¹¹Remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision"—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—
¹²remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)

GOSPEL: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When Jesus sends his disciples out to teach and heal, they minister among large numbers of people. Their work is motivated by Christ's desire to be among those in need.

³⁰ The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹ He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³² And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³ Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴ As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴ When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵ and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word, O God, be drawn near to us, that we might hear your voice in our lives this day, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

So... Jesus is back. If you heard the readings from the past couple Sundays, you would have seen Jesus in a bit of a funk, where he didn't have much power other than telling the disciples what to do. And truth be told, it was a little strange and disorienting to see him in that way. But now he's back in full force doing all the Jesus things, saying all the Jesus words, and being all the Jesus he can be. I don't know about the rest of you, but I kind of missed him.

But now that Jesus is back full Jesus-like after a couple weeks of not-so-Jesus-like-Jesus, I feel like we can resume with our regularly scheduled programming. I mean, he's teaching again and people are listening. He's healing again and people are being healed. He's even respected and loved again as people are literally running around lakes just to see him. I don't know if it can be more Jesus than that.

Except... well... it seems like he contradicts himself a bit in today's story, doesn't it. The disciples, all tired out from the mission that he gave them like 2 Sundays ago, are back with reports of all the good things that they have done in his name. He said go and they went. He said teach and they taught. He said heal, and somehow they were actually able to heal. But what they were now, as you would imagine, was tired.

Wouldn't you be if you were out doing all the things? So in a very Jesus-like way, Jesus says that they should take a break, put their feet up, and just chill for a while. And immediately that is what they did. They got in a boat which, if you remember, would be their happy place, and set off to some secluded place off the sea of Galilee. A nice remote spot off this 10 by 20 kilometer lake. A private beach somewhere on the shores of this body of water that only about 2/3 the size of Vancouver and Burnaby combined. As you could imagine, there weren't many options.

And these options were narrowed down even more when the people saw them and literally chased them on foot because they were so desperate for some more teaching and healing. I guess they didn't go very far, or didn't row very hard, or didn't plan out the trip too thoroughly. Their fans caught up with them lickety split just down from where they started, and gave them no room to be alone, to rest, or even to eat.

Don't you hate it when that happens? Sure, maybe we don't know what it's like to have adoring fans going all paparazzi on us, but I think we all, if we held any kind of responsibility to do anything at any point in time, would know what it's like to *think* we're free and clear when we really aren't. Like you think you've finished the dishes and are ready to go watch some tv or play that game but then another plate comes in. Or you're about to clock out after work but your boss says "Oh wait, I need you to look at one more thing" or something. Or you put the last period after the last amen on your sermon but you think, "my lanta that made no sense whatsoever" and start a rewrite.

It's like there's no rest for the wicked. There's always something else that has to be done. Life just doesn't let up at all.

And contrary to popular belief, this isn't a good thing. As much as we often use our busyness as a badge of honour, our workaholicism as a point of pride, our stressed and almost burned out mentality as a symbol of strength, we have to cognitively know that this just isn't healthy. We might want being overworked to be a good thing, seen as productive or responsible or something, but the fact of the matter is our bodies just need to rest in order to function properly. We are commanded to take at least a day off a week by the God of the covenant. We have been given the gift of Sabbath in order that our minds and souls can be properly cared for.

This was God's plan. This is what Jesus wanted. This is what the disciples so desperately needed. But the people, with all their immense need, didn't allow it to happen.

And since it was Jesus' idea to go get some R&R, you'd think that he'd be the first one to shoo the crowd away, right? You'd think he'd be the one to want to honour his own request for them to take a break. You'd think he'd be the one, of all people, know the value and sanctity of *Sabbath*.

Jesus didn't do or display all those things, did he? Not even close. It was the disciples who tried to get the people to leave them alone. The thing with that is, they weren't the main act. It was Jesus, the *real* Jesus, the Jesus of Messianic prophecy and faith, that the people wanted to see, to learn from, to experience.

And Jesus, being all compassion, being all love, being all Jesus, gives it to them.

The text tells us that he heals, teaches, and does all the things, totally disregarding what he asked of the disciples just moments before. It's like he completely forgot about the relaxing part of their trip. I wonder how disappointed the disciples are when they weren't able to take that rest that they so desperately needed.

But then, in spite of that, who said that they didn't find energy, fulfilment, and rejuvenation?

I mean, it wasn't them who was doing the healing, not really at least. They watched Jesus do it. They weren't doing all the teaching and talking. That was Jesus too. So they weren't doing the metaphoric heavy lifting so to speak. They'll do the literal heavy lifting next week though, picking up 12 baskets full of leftovers, but that's for next week.

So who's to say that this episode wasn't restful and rejuvenating for the disciples? That they weren't energized by watching Jesus finally be Jesus again? That just being in the presence of God in the flesh, God incarnate, *God with us* didn't give them the fulfilment that they were looking for?

Knowing the disciples, and knowing Jesus, I have a feeling that this was more than enough.

Now, I'm not saying that I'm going to be giving up my holidays coming up in a couple weeks or anything. Nor am I saying that we should be giving more, doing more, and serving more. Nor am I even saying

that we have one less excuse to not be at church on Sundays because we can get our rest here. But what I'm saying is that we can be re-energized by the grace of God. There is rejuvenation found in Jesus. We are led to green pastures and still waters by the Good Shepherd and are given the peace that fills our hearts and souls.

Peace to be in community. Peace to serve God and neighbour. Peace to love and be loved.

And that's the thing, isn't it? Love? That's what all this is about? See, it is out of love that we do what we do on the most part, but it is also out of love that Jesus welcomes us to rest. It is out of love that the Christ has a deep compassion for all those in need. It is out of love that our Saviour the Messiah heals, teaches, and guides us along paths of grace and righteousness. We have been given this love to strengthen us, empower us, and equip us to serve.

Then hopefully we'll find that in our service, in our reflecting of this love back onto others, that we are energized, fulfilled, and brought back into the wholeness of community and relationship, where we can see all people as God has created them: as loved and redeemed children of God, joined with us and all people as the one body of Christ.

This doesn't mean that we will no longer feel busy. This doesn't mean that we won't feel stressed and overworked. This doesn't even mean that we won't feel tired or need to rest. But rather, it means that when we need that rest, it will come. Perhaps not in the form that we might hope it would be, unfortunately, like an all-expense trip to some resort or something, but it might come in the form of us giving a little more where it might be fulfilling for us. Or it might be in us seeing the results of our work or relationships for the betterment of the community. Or it might even be in recognising the Jesus in others, reflecting that love out onto all people as well as onto us.

In this season after Pentecost when we focus on church health and growth, may we see and recognise Jesus in our midst, empowering us to serve, energizing us to rest, and leading us into peace. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation (#645)

CREED (WOV p. 18)

Together with all of God's blessed 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, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.*
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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

Empowered to love and serve God and neighbour, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "Lord, in your enriching mercy," and you are all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God of compassion, you lead and guide us into peace with all people, that we might live in community and service. Humble us in all that we do, that we might work for your glory instead of our own. Especially we pray for our neighbouring faith communities; those who use this building for worship, work, and play; our full communion partners: the Anglican Church of Canada and the Moravian Church in Canada; and all our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular we pray for Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Coquitlam and their pastor Eric Krushel; and for Trinity Lutheran Church in Delta and their pastor Jennifer Wilson. Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God of creation, we give thanks for all that you have made and have entrusted to us, for its beauty, its resourcefulness, and its ability to house life. May our care for this planet be pleasing to you, and may we all learn to live with all creatures great and small in harmony. Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God of justice, in you we find the strength to do what is right and for the good of all, not just for a select few. Continue to guide us in your ways of righteousness that the world might one day be free from oppression and brokenness. We pray especially for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into our country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well for those who have not yet arrived: Maেকে Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God of healing, you are with us through the pains and struggles of life, and you lead us into peace and wholeness. Especially reveal your love on those who may have wandered off the path or are feeling discouraged or defeated, and lift us all up into the joy of your grace. We lift in prayer our friends: Beulah; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Bryan and Chona; Bev and family; Ellwood; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Georgina; Tom; Teddy and family, Will and family and all whom we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

God of eternity, you welcome us together into your kingdom as the one body of Christ, connected to you and each other through your grace. May we always see evidence of this connection, that our actions might reveal and reflect your love onto all people. Lord, in your enriching mercy, **hear our prayer**.

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

PEACE (WOV p. 20)

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

DIALOGUE (WOV p. 36)

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 lifts us up out of our shame and empowers us to be your people, emboldening us 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 (WOV p. 36)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Yes Lord you are holy and mighty, and you strengthen us with your love and mercy to follow you on your paths of righteousness. You continue to lead us into the peace in knowing that you watch over us and hold our future. And even when times seem bleak and dire, you remind us of your unending presence through your Son, Jesus, who you sent to us to be among us as one of us, teaching us your truth of forgiveness and community.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his disciples for a final meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body broken for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then after they ate, he took the cup from the middle of the table, gave thanks, and passed it around for all 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 bread and cup that we see the strength of God empowering us to be God's people in community, even as we declare this basis of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So then it is to you, O God, that all honour and glory belong, for all that you do and continue to do for us, through us, and in spite of us, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (WOV p. 25)

Strengthened by the 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 strength and peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (WOV p. 39)

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (#611)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, again you have fed and nourished us with your love and truth, and you empower us as your servants in the world. Continue to show us your paths of righteousness and peace, that they might lead us alongside all the saints into your blessed kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

God our Shepherd guide you with blessing and joy,
God our Saviour redeem you with grace,
and God the Spirit bring us all together as one, this day and always.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling (#608)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, together as one in the Spirit.

Thanks be to God.