



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

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WOV Holy Communion, Setting Five: Bread of Life

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.

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 hən̓q̓əmi̓n̓əm̓ (Musqueam) and Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather in worship this day, with our eyes lifted up to our God enthroned in the heavens, who shows us mercy and grace and with arms of love, saves us from despair and death. So let us bow down in awe and reverence to our God as we sing praises out of our thanksgiving and joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: We All Are One in Mission (#576)

GREETING

The empowering grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unifying love of God, and the emboldening 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

God of grace and mercy, you call us to proclaim your healing and grace throughout the world. Strengthen us in this mission and forgive us our shortcomings, that our eyes may be fixed on you and your promises of peace and reconciliation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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,**

³so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
until he show us his mercy.

⁴**Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy,
for we have had more than enough of contempt,**

⁵too 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 (WOV p. 31)

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

God, may your Spirit rest in this place, open our hearts to hear your Word, and set us free to follow you and the power of your love, through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Last Sunday I complained a bit about how the incessant rains were cramping my style, and so of course today I'm going to complain about how too dang hot it's been since then. I say "of course," because such is the vibe here in the Lower Mainland, am I right? Like we have a very small window of comfort when it comes to the weather. Like it has to be sunny but not too sunny, warm but not too warm, breezy but not too breezy.

And that kind of weather is not just a myth, believe me, I've experienced it here before. Greatest 37 minutes of my life.

But outside of that window? Outside of that perfect paradigm? Outside of those idyllic memories of what the weather could be? Well, we in these here parts like to complain, complain, complain. Because even when I was enjoying that 37 minutes of perfect weather, I'm pretty sure there were too many bugs flying around. Gosh, I'm starting to sound like an old man, telling those young whipper snappers to get off my lawn.

This kind of complaining isn't just the weather, is it? We complain about a whole host of things. Yes, the weather is included, but outside of that we complain about the pests that the weather brings, how late or early it gets dark, and how we need to change our clocks twice a year. We complain about the cost of living these days from gas to groceries to real estate. We complain about the polarized opinions that flood society and social media, from religion to politics to whether the earth is round or flat. See what I mean? Complain, complain, complain.

Where does all this complaining even come from? Well, I think our experience has a lot to do with it. We remember an enjoyable experience from the past and we wish that life could always be that way. We look with fondness how things used to be and we hope they could be like that again. We recall what our bodies were able to do when we were young, how strong, how agile, and how easily it could stand up after sitting on the floor for more than 2 minutes, and we wonder just where did the time go. And since life rarely changes back to how it was, things rarely revert to how they were, and we never actually grow younger, we're left with these feelings of nostalgia, and perhaps even discontentment and want.

It's like we like to live in our memories and can't let go of what was. It's like we're stuck in our worldviews and paradigms of how things should be. It's like we can't and just don't want to step out of our comfort zones.

And there's nothing wrong with that, not really at least. There's nothing wrong with having fond memories. There's nothing wrong with missing how things used to be. There's nothing wrong with wanting to live in those comfort zones.

Well, nothing wrong with it unless our memories, our reminiscing of what was, or our comfort zones are just too narrow and rigid that it prevents us from moving forward, seeing the world as it is, and finding

joy in it all. Like just because the world is different now, it doesn't mean it should go back to the way it was. Just because things have changed from how we remember them, it doesn't mean that they're bad. Just because things fall outside of our small window of comfort, that doesn't make them worth complaining about.

And that brings us to today's gospel story. This is, to me, one of the more surprising stories of Jesus that we get, maybe because we don't often see Jesus as powerless very much. It tells us how Jesus goes back to his home town and finds himself unable to do anything for them. It tells us that Jesus can't help them or heal them because they remember him, perhaps as that illegitimate firstborn of a poor, unwed couple. This story tells us that Jesus can't impart any wisdom teaching on these folk because they don't think that this kid from the bricks could have anything to teach them. So much so that they take offense and complain.

Then Jesus' commentary on the situation hits pretty hard. "Prophets are not without honour," he says, "except in their hometown." I mean that just slaps, and not just because Jesus uses a double negative here. His words just resonate so much, at least with me, a borderline problem child who grew up in a church that thought that I'd amount to nothing. I'm not saying that I'm Jesus-level prophet or anything, but it's clear that even as a regular pastor, I don't have much honour, respect, or even clout among the folk who remember me from those days back then.

Its like who I am now in contrast to who I was falls too far outside of their paradigm of me. They can only acknowledge me as one way and they can't shake the thought that I'm not that guy anymore. Not entirely, at least. It's almost as though the very fact that I'm a pastor now is offensive to them, and they might even complain how that doesn't jive with the little window of comfort they have for me.

And this is what happened with Jesus in this story. Jesus, the Messiah, was left powerless because of this paradigm that these folk had of him. Jesus, the Son of God, had people complaining about him because they couldn't get over their memories of him. Jesus, the Saviour of the world, was unable to help these folk because he no longer fit inside the box that they built for him in their minds. This is what happened to Jesus in this story. And if we're honest, this is what happens to Jesus now.

Wait, what?

I can't be saying that we'd complain about Jesus, can I? I don't mean that we like to size Jesus up with our own expectations, do I? I mustn't be saying that we can be so closed minded that Jesus would be rendered powerless to help us, am I?

Depends, would I be fired if I were?

The thing is, we all have a faith story. We all have a reason why we're here now in this church, part of this community, a member of this congregation even. We all remember the history we have with Jesus, even if it is a non-existent history.

And in that story, in those experiences, in our memories, we can't help but have a window of comfort where Jesus fits in. It doesn't have to be narrow, it doesn't have to be too tiny and specific, it doesn't even have to be a bad thing. But if that window can't grow, if that window can't expand for us to learn new things, if that window is too static that it prevents us from seeing Jesus moving, working, and teaching us new and radical ways to love, then we might not be able to see what God is doing in our lives, in our community, and in the world.

But the good news is that even if that does happen, even if we see how we've put Jesus in a box, even when we catch ourselves complaining about how God isn't how we want or expect God to be, we are not given up on. God doesn't kick us to the curb and leave us to fend for ourselves. God doesn't say

“forget you then” and abandon us as punishment. God doesn’t even shake the dust off of God’s feet in protest of us.

Instead, God recruits others and different prophets to show us support. God finds new ways to remind us of how loved and forgiven we are. God raises all of us up and continues to save us.

And when we see that, when we see how much God loves, how much God gives, and how much God saves, we begin to recognise God in more places, we feel the joy of life again, and we change how we see the world. No longer will it be in our eyes a world that falls so far out of our comfort zones that we could only complain about it, but it becomes in our hearts a world that is broken yet healed, fallen yet lifted up, sinful yet forgiven... just as we are.

And just as God doesn’t give up on us, nor does God give up on the world. Even when we think the world is beyond saving, deserves a horrible and fiery end, or we can never stop complaining about it and the discomfort it puts us through, let’s not forget that this is the world that God loves and chooses to care for, lift up, and be present with always.

So in this season after Pentecost, let’s have our minds expanded by the power of the Spirit, that even in our distaste and complaints about life around us, that we’d be able to see Jesus living and breathing with, among, and all around us, teaching us, healing us, and revealing to us the joy in God’s love and grace. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Lord, You Give the Great Commission (#579)

CREED (WOV p. 18)

Together with all of God’s people in mission, 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

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, “in your empowering mercy, O Lord,” and you may respond with hear our prayer. In your empowering mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, our eyes are lifted to you in awe and wonder as you sit enthroned in the heavens. Granting us wisdom around your grace and love, that it might be reflected in our ministry and service for the sake of your gospel in the world. We lift up in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that use this building for worship, work, and play; our full-communion partners: the Anglican Church of Canada and the Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Christ Lutheran Church in Kelowna and their pastor Barbara Groote (GREW-tay); and for all our shared ministries in our Synod and all the pastors and leaders that serve them. In your empowering mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, our eyes look to you in appreciation of the goodness you have provided in all of creation. The beauty and wonder all around us is much more than we deserve, and it is our hope that we are able to properly care for it. May your name continue to be glorified throughout all that you have made. In your empowering mercy, 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 resources out of greed and selfishness. Make your grace and love apparent to all, and teach us to live in peace and equity. 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 as for those who have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. In your empowering mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, your mercy is great and you send us healing and support. May your love for us be always apparent, especially for those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that none would feel unvalued and without worth. Especially we pray for 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; and all whom we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time... In your empowering mercy, O Lord, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord our God, you save us from the scorn and derision of our enemies and adversaries, and you 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 might be pleasing to you. In your empowering mercy, 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 (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 from our shame and restores us back into community and wholeness, joining us with the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the entire church on earth in praising your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (WOV p. 36)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

O Lord, we lift our eyes to you as you are enthroned in the highest heaven with 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 when the time was right, you send to us Jesus, your Son, to show us just how wide and deep your love for us is.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the 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 then after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and shared it with 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 with this food that we see God's providence and care, even as we together 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 (WOV p. 25)

Lifted up and healed 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 God's abundant blessing and love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

Just As I Am, without One Plea (#592)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding with this heavenly food and nourishing us with your truth and love. Strengthen us as we go from here, that we might see and recognize the healing that you give that welcomes us back into wholeness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

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

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Drawn to the Light (#593)

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God.

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