



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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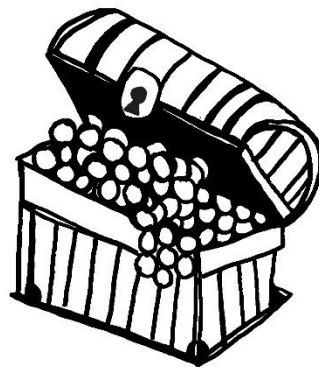
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Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost

October 13, 2024

ELW Holy Communion, Setting 10

The rich man who comes to ask Jesus what he should do to inherit eternal life is a good man, sincere in his asking. Mark's gospel is alone in saying that Jesus looked on him and loved him. Out of love, not as judgment, Jesus offers him an open door to life: sell all you own and give it to the poor. Our culture bombards us with the message that we will find life by consuming. Our assemblies counter this message with the invitation to find life by divesting for the sake of the other.

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 in thanksgiving for the wisdom and graciousness of our Lord, who satisfies us with steadfast love. So we come with rejoicing as we are made to be glad all our days through the salvation and redemption we receive through God's handiwork, giving us all we could ever ask or imagine, through Jesus Christ, our brother and our Saviour. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: Praise and Thanksgiving (#689)

GREETING

The truly surprising grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the impossible but made possible love of God, and the very accessible fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (p. 204)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

You alone are holy, O God; you alone are good. Help us to let go of the things that hold us back from seeing the fullness of your love and grace that reorder the world and welcome us into your salvation, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

WORD

FIRST READING: Amos 5:6-7, 10-15

A reading from Amos.

Amos was a herdsman by profession and a prophet by God's call. During a time of great prosperity in the northern kingdom of Israel, the prophet speaks to the wealthy upper class. He warns his listeners that fulfilling God's demand for justice brings blessing, while corruption and oppression incur God's wrath.

⁶Seek the LORD and live,
or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire,
and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it.

⁷Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood,
and bring righteousness to the ground!

¹⁰They hate the one who reproves in the gate,
and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

¹¹Therefore because you trample on the poor
and take from them levies of grain,
you have built houses of hewn stone,
but you shall not live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you shall not drink their wine.

¹²For I know how many are your transgressions,
and how great are your sins—
you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe,
and push aside the needy in the gate.

¹³Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time;
for it is an evil time.

¹⁴Seek good and not evil,
that you may live;
and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.

¹⁵Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 90:12-17

¹²So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

¹³**Return, O LORD; how long will you tarry?
Be gracious to your servants.**

¹⁴Satisfy us by your steadfast love in the morning;
so shall we rejoice and be glad all our days.

¹⁵**Make us glad as many days as you afflicted us
and as many years as we suffered adversity.**

¹⁶Show your servants your works,
and your splendor to their children.

¹⁷**May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us;
prosper the work of our hands; prosper our handiwork.**

SECOND READING: Hebrews 4:12-16

A reading from Hebrews.

We cannot hide our thoughts, desires, and actions from God, to whom we are completely accountable. Nevertheless, Jesus understands our human weakness and temptations, because he also experienced them. Therefore we can approach the throne of grace to receive divine mercy from Christ.

¹²Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 205)

GOSPEL: Mark 10:17-31

The holy gospel according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus has been teaching his disciples about what is most valued in God's eyes. Now, a conversation with a rich man brings his message home to the disciples in a way that is surprising but unforgettable.

¹⁷As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²²When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁷Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

²⁸Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." ²⁹Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

May your Word, O God, living and active, pierce our hearts and open our minds, that we might see you in and around our community and world, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

So I have a bit of a confession to make: I spent a lot of money this past week. Amazon had another Prime Day for some strange reason and then there was this random warehouse sale that we went to, and well... one thing led to another and now we have a lot more stuff.

Well, maybe not a lot for some people's standards, but for me, as a middle-aged dad with a modest-paying job acting as the main bread winner of the house, it was a lot. Or maybe it just seems like a lot because I don't usually spend that much on a regular basis, unless I'm paying for car insurance or something. Or maybe it looks like we splurged because we bought some stuff that will be nice to have, but we don't really need it. Or maybe in the back of my mind, I think that we might have spent too much, to the point that I'm calling this a confession, because deep down... I feel kind of guilty.

Why you ask? Well, because I'm cheap. I have to be. I need to be. I can't afford not to be.

Now you might be thinking, cheap? You? You don't look frugal. What, with these flashy clothes and that fancy car and a dumb racing simulator steering wheel, but believe me, I really do pinch those pennies. I rarely buy anything that isn't on sale, my car is coming up to 15 years old now believe it or not, and that simulator wheel was very second hand which I just happened to get for a pretty sweet deal.

So yeah, I'm pretty cheap.

But don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining about my compensation here or anything, this congregation has been more than fair with my salary. What I'm saying is that life... or at least life here in the Lower Mainland... is expensive. Housing, food, gas, it's all so expensive. It's like I don't need my degrees in theology, I need them in finance just so I could figure out how to live in this part of the world.

Again, I'm not at all complaining about my pay here at the church, I know I'm not here to get rich. But I guess I'm just saying that sometimes, especially in weeks like these when I feel so bad for spending so much money, I wish I was rich. I wish I didn't have to worry about money so much and didn't feel the need to constantly pinch those pennies. I wish that I could be more carefree when it comes to finances, because maybe then I would be more happy? Or at least, I'd have all the things I want, like a new racing simulator wheel instead of a used one.

And I'm not sure there is anything wrong with that. I'm not sure if there's anything wrong with wanting to be comfortable, nothing wrong with hoping to be financially independent, nothing wrong with wishing to be rich.

I mean, everyone wants that, don't they? Isn't that the goal of life? It sure seems like it for us in our time, and I would argue that it was the case back in bible times as well. Back in those days, being rich wasn't exactly common. Or at least, the commoners weren't rich. Being rich meant you were powerful, important, and feared. Being rich was something that brought out admiration from others, respect, and maybe even a little envy. Being rich meant that you had somehow found favour in God's eyes, and were blessed. That's sort of what we think now too, isn't it? At least, that's what the rich would like everyone to believe. And in a way, I think most people do. The poor folk, the rich folk, and likely even the disciples did as well.

So when Jesus told this rich man in today's gospel lesson to sell everything he owned in order for him to get into the kingdom of God, the disciples were probably taken aback a little because it would have been such a foreign idea to them. Why would he need to purge his blessings? And when the rich man dropped his head and walked away with his tail between his legs, it's almost as Jesus stops them from reaching out with a sympathetic hand with his words, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God."

Wait, what? Doesn't having wealth mean that you're already in the kingdom of God? Doesn't having a lot of possessions prove that God has been watching over you and caring for your every need? Doesn't being rich mean that God loves you the most?

So understandably, the disciples were confused. And almost right on cue, Jesus knows this and reiterates and clarifies, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God.” Hang on, that doesn’t clear anything up at all! In fact, it kind of makes things worse. Is Jesus saying that it’s not just hard for the powerful and respected rich, but it’s hard for everyone else as well? He can’t be saying that, can he?

But then almost to relieve them of their anxieties, Jesus qualifies that with the very famous, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” So we’re back to it being difficult for just the rich then. Still a tough one to swallow, but we’ll allow it because we’re off the hook. Or are we?

The disciples wonder out loud, “then who can be saved?” almost as though they were fishing for a response from Jesus, something like, “well, you of course, my good and faithful servants.” That would have made things a lot easier, wouldn’t it? Take the load off the disciples and let them know that they’re in.

But Jesus doesn’t do or say that. Instead, Jesus says, “for mortals it is impossible.”

Well, that makes matters worse. It’s impossible for all of us? Even this very disciplined and morally righteous rich guy who wasn’t just good, but gooder than good since his youth can’t be saved? Even those who are poor, maybe a little less cultured, or a bit rough around the edges, those that Jesus said he forgives? They can’t be saved? And even these disciples, who gave up everything, their families, their friends, their nets, their boats, their very lives to follow Jesus and now he’s telling them they can’t be saved either?

Then what chance is there for even us? We who are so far removed from those times, we who reside in a totally different culture and climate from when these bible stories occurred, we who do what we can to the best of our ability to look like good Christians, rich in faith, secure in our identities, and receptive of God’s blessing. Are you saying we can’t be saved either?

Essentially, yes.

By the standards we put in front of ourselves, yes. By the standards that God puts out in front of us, yes. By the way we see the world, the way we act in the world, and the way we want this whole world for ourselves, yes. We cannot be saved.

Not on our own at least.

We cannot be saved by our own merit. We cannot be saved by being disciplined enough and not break a single rule since our youth. We cannot be saved through our wealth and riches. No, we are all equally unsaved and equally unable to do anything about that. For us, it is impossible.

But as Jesus says, with God.... with God all things are possible.

Possible in that it is God who saves us, rich, poor, and everything in between. It is God who saves no matter our background, upbringing, and culture. It is God who saves us through lavish grace and mercy, welcoming us with open arms into God’s kingdom, where we are called children of God, empowered to be God’s hands and feet in the world, serving God and

neighbour for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is God who saves, because we can't do it on our own.

So you see, my friends, we might want to be rich with earthly wealth, but that doesn't change our position with God. We might cherish our rich morality and faith, but that won't change our position with God. We might even just not care about anything and live cheque to cheque or nothing at all, and that cannot change our position with God. In fact, nothing, not trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or angels or demons or even death could ever change our position with God. That is, born citizens of God's kingdom, held in love by God's hand, and saved by the grace that sent to us Jesus Christ our Lord. For God, all things are possible.

So on this Thanksgiving Sunday, may we give thanks for all the blessings that we have, all the riches that are given to us, and all the love of the universe shown to us by the God who gives us strength. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: God of Grace and God of Glory (#705)

CREED (p. 104)

With all of God's impossibly loved people, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**
**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Called to hear and follow God's Word in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with "Lord, in your humbling mercy," and you are invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you teach us, reveal to us your wisdom, and are gracious to us, as you bestow your love and forgiveness on us all. Strengthen our ministry and increase the reach of your gospel in the world. We remember in prayer our neighbouring faith communities; those that use this building for worship, work, and play; our partners Anglican Church of Canada and Moravian

Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIIC. In particular, we pray for First Lutheran Church in Vancouver and their interim pastor Dave Lefsrud; and for the Lutheran Campus ministries, their chaplains, and all their students across our country. Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your steadfast love is satisfying and you make our days glad through the wonders and beauty of your creation. May we keep the future in mind as we care for all you've entrusted to us, that the generations to come can continue to enjoy all this world has to offer. Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you reach out to us and save us from adversity, and gladness abounds in your justice. Grant your wisdom to all world leaders, politicians, and governments, that their leading be for the good of all. We pray for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to enter into this 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. Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, you lift us up out of our ailments and bring us into your splendor, where we can see your good works and love in the world. Continue to be among those of us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, and reveal your healing and wholeness to us all. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Debbie; Beulah; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Bishop Kathy; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Thomas; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; Georgina; Teddy and family; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...
Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, your grace is upon us as you welcome us to live in your eternal kingdom with you and all the saints. May our lives be inspired by the faith of the past, and may we be inspiring for the faith of the future. Lord, in your humbling mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your unending grace and mercy shown to us by 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, to at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who reveals to us all how wide and vast your love and

grace are, joining us 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

O Lord you are mighty and powerful yet gracious and loving. You welcome us into your fold even when we don't deserve it. You teach us the truth of your salvation and redemption, and you show us how in you, nothing is impossible when it comes to forgiveness, welcome, and community.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son our Lord Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where he took the bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it 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 cup, gave thanks, and passed it around the table for 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 bread and cup that we see the fullness of your grace given to us, your undeserving servants, as well as in this mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

So we together in thanksgiving give all honour and glory to you, O God, for this food, for your love, and for your unending grace upon us all, through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 112)

Gathered into gracious love 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, God's impossible love made possible for us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 208)

Will You Come and Follow Me (#798)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for again feeding and nourishing us with your Word, your love, and your grace, empowering us to be your people in the world. May your strength and wisdom flow through us, that our lives might reflect your blessing and welcome throughout the world, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

May God, the first and the last, bless you and keep you,
God, the beginning and end, shine on you and show you grace,
God, the Alpha and Omega, look upon you with favour, and bring you peace.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing (#807)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, live in grace and follow Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

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