



**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC**

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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**Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 14, 2025
WOV Holy Communion, Setting Five: Bread of Life**

The grumbling of the religious leaders in today's gospel is actually our holy hope: This Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them. That our God seeks and saves the lost is not only a holy hope, it is our only hope. As the writer of 1 Timothy reminds us, "The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thanks be to God.

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 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 Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day in God's steadfast love and mercy, where we find compassion and forgiveness and our wickedness is washed away. For by the righteous and gracious judgement of God, we are found to be purer than snow. So we sing with joy and gladness with clean hearts with our spirits renewed in worship, service, and community, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy (#588)

GREETING

The reaching grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the seeking love of God, and the welcoming 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

Merciful God, by the life and teachings of your Son Jesus, we see all that you do to show us your love and welcome, and we are empowered to share this good news of forgiveness and salvation in your name to all the world, through your same Son Jesus Christ our brother and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Exodus 32:7-14

A reading from Exodus.

While Moses is on Mount Sinai, the people grow restless and make a golden calf to worship. Today's reading shows Moses as the mediator between an angry God and a sinful people. Moses reminds God that the Israelites are God's own people, and boldly asks for mercy for them.

⁷ The LORD said to Moses, "Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸ they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' " ⁹ The LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰ Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, 'I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.' " ¹⁴ And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 51:1-11

- ¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your lovingkindness;
in your great compassion blot out my offenses.
- ² **Wash me through and through from my wickedness,
and cleanse me from my sin.**
- ³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- ⁴ **Against you only have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight.**
- ⁵ And so you are justified when you speak
and upright in your judgment.
- ⁶ **Indeed, I have been wicked from my birth,
a sinner from my mother's womb.**
- ⁷ For behold, you look for truth deep within me,
and will make me understand wisdom secretly.
- ⁸ **Purge me from my sin, and I shall be pure;
wash me, and I shall be clean indeed.**
- ⁹ Make me hear of joy and gladness,
that the body you have broken may rejoice.
- ¹⁰ **Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.**
- ¹¹ Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

SECOND READING: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

A reading from 1 Timothy.

The letters to Timothy and Titus are called the pastoral epistles because they contain advice especially intended for leaders in the church. Here the mercy shown to Paul, who once persecuted the church, is cited as evidence that even the most unworthy may become witnesses to the grace of God.

¹² I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he considered me faithful and appointed me to his service, ¹³ even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, ¹⁴ and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience as an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. ¹⁷ To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (WOV p. 31)

GOSPEL: Luke 15:1-10

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus tells two stories that suggest a curious connection between the lost being found and sinners repenting. God takes the initiative to find sinners, each of whom is so precious to God that their recovery brings joy in heaven.

¹ Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] ² And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

⁸ “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ ¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

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

SERMON

By the gift of your Spirit, O God, may your truth be revealed, your wisdom heard, and your love felt by all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

So these parables that we get for today shouldn't be strangers to anyone. Not because they're super popular on their own, mind you, but because they are part of the same series of parables from Jesus that includes one of the most famous ones ever told: the Prodigal Son. And while we don't get that parable today, these three are usually interpreted together as having the same message. In that, there was something or some one who changed their status from good to bad, from safe and secure to not so much, from found to lost. But then there was some sort of reconciliation and the lost whatever it was welcomed back with open arms and there is a celebration of some kind to that effect.

So often we think that the lesson in these stories is for us to repent from our lostness and turn back to God, who will graciously welcome us back for being the true repentant sinners that we are. We're taught that this is what we must do, how we get back into God's good books, the formula for salvation, right?

Yeah except... I don't exactly buy it. Not because I'm this rabble rouser that likes to rouse up rabble, but from what I understand from scripture and traditional Lutheran theology, salvation is not up to us... not for us or anyone else. It is 100% God's gift alone by God's own action, apart from anything we do or don't do. The offer of forgiveness is not beholden to our repentant hearts or lack thereof. Grace by its very definition, cannot have any conditions attached to it. That is just what salvation means to me.

Of course, I'm not saying that our salvation doesn't change us or move and motivate us to be better, I'm just saying that those things aren't precursors for what we are offered and receive as God's beloved people in the world. Like think about it, while the prodigal son, who again wasn't included in today's slew of parables, might have seemed to turn around in his ways to ask for forgiveness, he actually didn't. According to the story he had no intention on repenting, reconciling, or being restored. He just wanted a job. He was content to stay as lost as he was. But it was his father who forgave him without being asked to, welcomed him without obligation, and loved him without condition.

Likewise with the other parables that we actually did get today. The lost sheep didn't ping the shepherd's phone with the coordinates of their exact location and say sorry for wandering off, nor did the lost coin send an S.O.S. to its owner for it to be found and vow never to get lost again. No, the respective sentient beings in these stories took the initiative to find, to recover, and to bring back into the collection and community where the formerly lost belonged.

See, these stories aren't as much about the lost being found, but more about the guardians and caretakers going out of their way to find. These parables aren't about what we need to do in order to be saved, but about what God does to save us. These lessons don't teach us how to avoid being lost, but they teach us about God's meticulous care and compassion in seeing us, knowing us, and reminding us that while we might feel lost from time to time, we are never forgotten.

And honestly, I don't think this message could have come at a better time. I mean, hasn't the world felt really lost for the past while? It's like we've our way, we've lost ourselves, we've lost what it means to be collegial, considerate, and capable of any kind of relationship whatsoever. And perhaps worst yet, it feels like we've lost respect for each other and especially for those who are different from us. Instead of trying to work it out or learning to agree to disagree, there has just been more division, more finger pointing, more hatred on all sides.

And this is so concerning to me.

Sure, we might say that the world was never all that great to begin with, you know with the whole history of human war thing, but in the past few years it felt like any ground we've gained toward living peaceably with each other has been tossed out the window.

You probably heard that this past week a prominent and outspoken personality in the States was shot and killed while having a public debate at a university. The victim was very strong in their beliefs, opinions, and stance particularly in the political scope. And I admit that he often rubbed me the wrong way because we couldn't be further apart in our views and paradigms. But that doesn't mean that I wished him dead. In fact, I totally did not.

But that doesn't stop those on his side from accusing me and others who are not on his side in doing so. Before any evidence at all, people were blaming and pointing fingers, loudly voicing their assumptions as though they were truth, and even writing and monetizing songs explicitly saying whose fault this is... again, without any evidence whatsoever. And even now that the alleged shooter was found and didn't exactly fit the mold of what they were saying, they continued with false narratives and rhetoric to justify their harsh and almost deadly feelings and intentions.

And that is what I see time and again, not just around this particular event but around the so many political deaths and threats and violence that just keeps happening. It's like people can't stop pitting themselves against each other. They can't stop vilifying and dehumanizing those that don't agree with them. They can't stop stewing in their anger and hate and directing it toward everyone else... but themselves.

And it's awful.

What happened to us? Why are we so divided? How can we be so... lost?

I know, we all have ideas in our heads on who to blame. And that's the problem. It's always them. Them on the other side of us, them who see things differently and don't agree with us, them who don't hold the same creed, opinion, and culture as us. Like we have a say in their salvation.

And I admit, I wish I do too.

But then texts like today's, these parables remind me that it's not their fault as much as we want it to be. The coin didn't decide to be lost, the sheep didn't know better, the younger son only did what he thought was best for him and his future. Ok, maybe that was his fault, but c'mon can you blame him?

And when I remember that the state of being lost isn't a conscious choice and decision, I have to remember how being found is one. But not ours, mind you, but God's.

See as Jesus teaches us with these parables, the point isn't that we're lost. That just and will happen from time to time, that is just a part of life. But the point is, the lesson here, the gracious promise from God is that the lost won't stay lost. The outcast won't stay excluded. The hated can and still will be loved. We learn that God sees us, knows us, and saves us with a grace that could pick out a single coin out of ten or a sheep out of a hundred or a sinner like us out of an infinite amount of them. And God chooses to find us, welcome us, and throw a party for us.

I know, this might not sound like good news, because honestly we kind of like hating on those we think are lost and hope they stay that way. But we have to remember and believe that God's grace can cover even those that we hate, because God's grace covers us, who they hate. God's grace can and has to be able to cover the lines we draw, go over the walls we build, and traverse over the chasms we dig and widen between us. God's grace can and will find us, restore us, and rejoin us together in this same body of Christ that extends to all forgiveness, reconciliation, and salvation.

This reminds me of a quote that I heard from someone but can't seem to find the source for, but it said something like "we pray to learn to love those we don't like, and if we can't, we pray that God can love them for us."

Friends, this is my prayer for us today. This is my plea for us as we carry on through this tumultuous landscape filled with tripwires and landmines. This is my sure and certain hope in the resurrection, that no matter how gone our goodness and righteousness seem, no matter how far away our ability to get along feels like, no matter how lost we as a whole human race are, may we remember that God will find us, God will love us, and God will celebrate our salvation because we are *just that loved*. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling (#608)

CREED (WOV p. 18)

With all the lost and now found, 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

Welcomed into the grace and compassion of God, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with “by your steadfast mercy, O God,” and you’re all invited to respond with **hear our prayer**. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, in your compassion you blot out our offenses and cleanse us from sin. You seek us out and welcome us back into your community and love. May our lives always reflect your gracious promises, that all people might see your presence in the world. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we know we are sinners by nature, but you continue to love and forgive us. May this truth be apparent in our lives and in our ministry, and may it be revealed through our words and actions. We pray this for our neighbouring faith communities; those who 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 ELCIC. In particular we pray for St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Prince Rupert and the pastors and leaders that serve them; and for Our Saviour Lutheran Church in Richmond and their pastor Christoph Reiners. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, your creation was made perfect and beautiful, but since has been tainted with wickedness and greed. Increase in us faithful stewardship and may our care for this planet be seen and felt for the future generations. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you instill the truth of your love and grace deep within us and you judge us with forgiveness and mercy. Be with all world leaders and people of influence and bring us into peace among the nations and across the borders. We pray especially for all those experiencing war, violence, and political turmoil that your healing might fall on your people and all lands. Especially we pray for the continued support of those that we’ve sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; Solyana Amanuel; and Filimon Abraha; as well as for those who have not yet arrived: Mikele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Meri Gabramikael. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, we often come before you with broken bodies and spirits, and you continually lead us into joy and gladness with your healing. Be with all those who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely that none of us might forget of the joy in your name. Especially we pray for Bryan and Chona; Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Will and family; Adele and family; the Joughin family; Bev and family; John and Betty; Sukhwant; Pastor Kristen; Laura; Kandie; Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Hwee Yang; Kelly; Betty; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

O Lord, you create in us clean hearts as you renew our spirits of hope and joy, and you join us together in community with you and all the saints of all times and places as the one body of Christ in the world. Remind us always of how your love finds us, and may our lives be testament of your promises of grace and welcome. By your steadfast mercy, O God, **hear our prayer**.

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your steadfast love and mercy, shown to 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 and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O God, through Jesus our Lord; who reveals to us the joy found in your name, that we might 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

O God, by your steadfast love you have mercy on us, and in your great compassion you blot out our offenses. You wash us through and through from our wickedness and you cleanse us from our sin. For we are aware of our sinful nature and guilt is ever before us. Yet while only you are justified when you speak and right in your judgement, you sent to us Jesus to seek us out, show us the truth of your love, and by your power and authority remove our sin, making us clean as snow.

For on the night that he was betrayed, Jesus sat with his friends for a meal, where 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, gave thanks, and shared that saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this bread and cup that we hear the joy and gladness of our brokenness being healed and sins forgiven, even as we declare the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ has risen.

Christ will come again.

May your eternal grace and mercy create in us clean hearts, renewing right spirits within us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (WOV p. 25)

Found by the love of God through 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 welcome and steadfast love.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

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

Chief of Sinners Though I Be (#609)

I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say (#611)

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, you have again fed us and nourished us with your Word and your love, saving us with your grace and mercy. Enrich our lives with your blessing and strengthen us in our representing you and your work in the world in and around us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May our God, the ruler of the ages, the immortal and invisible one, bless you, be with you, and find you in love wherever and in whatever circumstance we may be, this day and always.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN: Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer (#618)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, be strengthened by the steadfast love of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

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