



GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer (ELCA)

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Worship

Prelude

“How Small our Span of Life”

ELW #636

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Ringling of Chimes

Welcome

Gathering

Call to Worship

Psalm 145: 1, 2 8

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

² Every day I will bless you, and praise your name forever and ever.

⁸ The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation. **Amen**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

Faithful God,

Have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of + Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world. **Amen**

Hymn *"Great is Thy Faithfulness"* ELW #733, vs. 1, 3

**Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not; as thou has been, thou forever wilt be. Refrain:**

**Refrain: Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and birth hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!**

Refrain:

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Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God,

You show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

The Word

New Testament Reading

Philippians 1: 21 - 30

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷ **Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,** ²⁸ and are in no way intimidated by your opponents.

For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God!**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

The Gospel according to Matthew: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel

Matthew 20: 1 - 16

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴ and he said to them, ‘**You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.**’ So they went.

⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘**Why are you standing here idle all day?**’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘**Because no one has hired us.**’ He said to them, ‘**You also go into the vineyard.**’

⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘**Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.**’ ⁹ When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.

¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘**These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.**’

¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you.

¹⁵ ‘**Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?**’ ¹⁶ **So the last will be first, and the first will be last.**”

The Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Children's Time

The Parable of the Vineyard

Whirl p. 210 Spark p. 298

Sermon

Rev. Diane M. Goulson

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and gracious Savior, Jesus the Christ, and from God our Father. Amen

Boy, these Bible readings and stories don't get any easier do they? Last week we talked about forgiveness and that was hard. And today the topic seems to be fairness. Is God fair? We will learn that God doesn't fit into our box of who we want God to be . . . a God who is predictable, and whose actions and expectations fit into *our worldly* understanding of *fair*. What if I told you in our Gospel today, we see God being *more than fair*?

Do yourself a favor and go get your Bible. Look up and read Matthew 19: 23 - 30. Notice that 19:30 and 20:16 are the same! These two stories that describe being part of the Kingdom of Heaven are connected. It is helpful to read them both. Together.

In Chapter 19 we learn that it is hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Many of us have fallen into believing in a prosperity Gospel - the idea I will do well financially and gain power in this world if what I have done has made me good with God. Jesus lets us know that that is not true. We learn in 19:26 that “For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.” Whoa! How Lutheran! **It isn't about us, it is about what God does!**

Then in 19:27 Peter asks a powerful question, “Look we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Sounds a lot like the workers of the vineyard who had worked all day doesn’t it. Perhaps it is how you feel if you have worked hard at serving others within the Church, tithed both money and time and talents. Maybe you are thinking to yourself, “I have given more than so many others to God, so what “more” will I get? Don’t I deserve “more”? Haven’t I earned “more”?”

Jesus’ answer in Chapters 19 and 20 remind us of who we are and even more about God. Matthew 19: 28 - 30 and 20: 13 - 16 remind us that God will be God and that God is not limited by our understanding of fair.

In Matthew 19: 28 - 30 Jesus makes clear to the disciples that what they will receive will be great AND so it will be for all who follow Jesus. *“And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name’s sake (because that is what we all are called to do as believers - leave the callings of this world behind), will receive a hundred fold, and will inherit eternal life.”*

In Matthew 20: 13 - 16 we read where the wealthy landowner now addresses one of his employees who has worked for him 12 hours, a lowly day worker, not a beggar, but one who lives on the edge of surviving, as *Friend*. Wow. A relationship is now emphasized. And the landowner’s concern and awareness of individual needs and situations are highlighted. An awareness that the workers probably don’t have about one another or maybe aren’t even aware of for themselves. “Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?” This is what was agreed upon, true? *“Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?”* If we are honest, we would admit we are envious because God is generous with what is God’s to give. And what a lesson that is for us.

From the beginning our relationship with God is about what God has given to us. Our creator gives us the breath of life. In our baptism, “through water and the Holy Spirit” we as the children of God are given a new birth, cleansed from sin and raised to eternal life. The promise is the same for all of us. We are all “sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.” What that means for each of us and in our lives may look different. That is up to God. None of us can earn “more” from God than what God is going to give.

In the prayer that Jesus taught us, we pray “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” We ask God to do His Will here and to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into this world.

God knows his children. He knows who we are, what we are, and what we need. He provides and asks us to share what we have, knowing we can trust that he will provide as needed. In this time when equity is such a buzz word, we are challenged to realize that some will need and receive a full day’s wage for an hour’s work because that is what they need to survive at this time. We are called to answer God’s call, not for what we can earn, but for what has already been most graciously promised, the presence and grace of God in our lives now and the gift of eternal life in a never ending future. Thanks be to God!

Blessing May the peace of God that passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. **Amen**

Apostles’ 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

We Respond to the Word

Offering Gathered Prepare your offering to be mailed to church.

Remember: Your giving isn't about how the pastor or the council or anyone else is doing, it is only meant to be your response to God for all that God has done for you. It is also your fulfillment of your vows when you joined the church as a member.

Song

"Will You Let Me Be Your Servant"

ELW #659

Text: Richard Gillard.; Music: Richard Gillard; arr. Betty Pulkingham. Text and music © 1977 Scripture In Song, admin. Integrity Music. Streamed under CCLI # 20751127, Size A.

Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

A brief silence.

Generous God, you challenge the Church by making the last first, and the first last. Equip us for the works of service you have called us to do. Strengthen those who suffer for Christ.

Nothing in creation is outside your concern, mighty God. We lift up the people suffering with the fires in the west coast, the hurricanes in the southeast, and those beginning harvest.

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence. Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of those seeking peace.

Reveal yourself to all in need, you who are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to relent from punishing. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to the many seeking work.

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. We celebrate with Laura and Paul who will be married this afternoon. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need. Especially Bea, Jim, Robert, Gary, and Cindy. Guide us as we prepare for in person worship so that all may be safe and worship without fear of illness.

Give us faithfulness to follow the generations that have declared your power to us, so that we may live for Christ and not for ourselves, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around God's heavenly throne.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Sending

Blessing

Mothering God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen**

Hymn

"On Our Way Rejoicing"

ELW #537 LBW #260, vs. 1 & 2

On our way rejoicing gladly let us go. Christ our Lord has conquered; vanquished is the foe. Christ without, our safety; Christ within our joy; who, if we be faithful, can our hope destroy?

Refrain:

Refrain: **On our way rejoicing; as we forward move, harken to our praises, O blest God of love!**

Unto God the Father joyful songs we sing; unto God the Savior thankful hearts we bring; unto God the Spirit bow we and adore, on our way rejoicing now and evermore. Refrain:

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