

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY
FEBRUARY 20, 2022

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA



PRELUDE

Hail, O source of Every Blessing
Setting: Paul Soulek

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN (Stand) #409

Hail, O Source of Every Blessing

- 1 Hail, O Source of ev'ry blessing,
Father of our human race!
Gentiles now, Your grace possessing,
In Your courts obtain a place.
Grateful now, we fall before You,
In Your Church rejoice to live,
See Your glory and adore You,
Thankful for the grace You give.
- 2 Once far off but now invited,
We approach Your sacred throne,
In Your covenant united,
Reconciled, redeemed, made one.
Now revealed to eastern sages,
See the Star of Mercy shine,
Myst'ry hid in former ages,
Myst'ry great of love divine.
- 3 Hail, O all-inviting Savior!
Gentiles now their off'rings bring,
In Your temples seek Your favor,
Jesus Christ, our Lord and King.
May we, body, soul, and spirit,
Live devoted to Your praise,
Glorious realms of bliss inherit,
Grateful anthems ever raise.

CONFESSIO AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

(Silence for reflection)

Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

KYRIE

p. 204

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation; and for the peace of the whole world and the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise; and for the well-being of the whole church of God in Christ, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

HYMN OF PRAISE

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**1 To God on high be glory
And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven
Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father;
Your holy name, we sing—
Our thanks for Your great glory,
Lord God, our heav'nly King.**

**2 To You, O sole-begotten,
The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior,
You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus;
Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated
At God's right hand on high—**

**3 For You alone are holy;
You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever,
Be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit
Alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory.
"Amen!" our glad reply.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray. O God,
the strength of all who put their trust in You, mercifully grant that by Your power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST LESSON (Be seated)

Genesis 45:3-15

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.' And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Choir

- 1 The tree of life with ev'ry good
In Eden's holy orchard stood,
And of its fruit so pure and sweet
God let the man and woman eat.
Yet in this garden also grew
Another tree, of which they knew;
Its lovely limbs with fruit adorned
Against whose eating God had warned.
- 2 The stillness of that sacred grove
Was broken, as the serpent strove
With tempting voice Eve to beguile
And Adam too by sin defile.
O day of sadness when the breath
Of fear and darkness, doubt and death,
Its awful poison first displayed
Within the world so newly made.
- 3 What mercy God showed to our race,
A plan of rescue by His grace:
In sending One from woman's seed,
The One to fill our greatest need—
For on a tree uplifted high
His only Son for sin would die,
Would drink the cup of scorn and dread
To crush the ancient serpent's head!

Congregation

- 4 **Now from that tree of Jesus' shame
Flows life eternal in His name;
For all who trust and will believe,
Salvation's living fruit receive.
And of this fruit so pure and sweet
The Lord invites the world to eat,
To find within this cross of wood
The tree of life with ev'ry good**

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. . . .

Why am I in danger every hour? I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

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Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**These things are written that you may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 6:27-38

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 6th chapter
Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

"If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to You, O Christ.**

SERMON

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

Today's words from Jesus come from his so-called "sermon on the plain." The text picks up at the point in the sermon where Jesus has just finished his introduction and begins to delve into some specific subjects. Today's subject, as we heard, is that of loving our enemies.

To get into the subject, we do well to first review what Jesus said in the sermon's introduction. As we discovered last Sunday, when we considered the text, Jesus used words which were reminiscent of a common way of teaching in the Old Testament – that of describing two contrasting ways.

"Two-ways teaching" explains that there are two ways one can go in life. One of these is a way leading to life and the other a way leading to death. In Jesus' introduction, those going the way of life are the ones who are "blessed," while those going the way of death are warned with words of "woe."

However, like he often did, Jesus also threw in a twist. When announcing his blessings and woes, Jesus reversed what seemed to be conventional wisdom. He said that instead of the rich being the ones who were blessed it was actually the poor, the hungry, the sorrowful and the hated.

Jesus said this in order to point his hearers to the blessings he brings – both those received at present and those received in the future. Jesus' blessings are often different than the world's. And because of this, his words here point to what is often called the "great reversal."

Today's portion of the sermon is also an example of great reversal teaching. Jesus says: "But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who abuse you." People usually tend to hate their enemies. Which seems rather natural to us. But Jesus urges a reversal. We are to love our enemies instead. And do good to them.

Now, you and I, when we hear this teaching of Jesus, might quickly agree and nod our heads. That's because the teaching is a part of our creed. The idea of loving the unlovable is a thread that has been woven into the fabric of our religious attire since we were old enough to say: "God is love." The only words of Jesus here which we might feel need a little extra clarification are the ones where he says: "Pray for those who abuse you." To these we point out that he says "pray," and not "stay." Yes. Most definitely.

Still, our conditioned acceptance of Jesus' words should not mask the fact that at their root, these words are radical. And controversial.

In Matthew's recording of them, Jesus prefaces the teaching by saying: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' Jesus adds this preface because hating your enemy was common and accepted wisdom. And certainly one that prevailed on the streets.

Millenia of Christian missions have brought about a change. We have learned to love our enemies.

But the change is not a complete one. The harsh truth is that even we Christians have a hard time believing it. And we certainly have a hard time practicing it.

It's hard to love our enemies. Today, one reason for this is that we don't spend much time with them. We've separated ourselves from those we disagree with. As a result, we don't see them as real people. We see them, instead, as caricatures – mere representations of something we believe to be bad. We don't see people like us. Instead, we see vaxxers or anti-vaxxers; mask-wearers or non-mask-wearers; liberals or conservatives; tax-happy socialists or heartless libertarians.

Related to this is the fact that so much of what we read and hear is meant to harden us in our positions. As some have said: we're drinking haterade every day!

Still, the main reason it's so hard to love our enemies is because we don't trust them. And we fear them. We think that if we love them, they'll take advantage of our love. We think that if we love them, they'll see us as weak.

Do you know the story of Franz Stigler? Franz Stigler was a German Luftwaffe pilot in the Second World War. One day while piloting a fighter plane, he came across a crippled American bomber which was trying to get back to England. The plane was riddled with bullet holes and the crew were all wounded or dead. The pilot was a 21-year-old named Charlie Brown who was on his first mission.

When Stigler saw the condition of the plane, he felt that bringing it down would be murder. So instead of shooting it, he escorted the plane to a safe place and then peeled off, giving a salute to Brown. Can you imagine?

Stigler never spoke of this incident since he could have been court-martialed and executed. Charles Brown told his commanding officers, who chose to keep it secret.

But decades later, the two pilots met in a well-publicized friendly encounter. Beautiful!

Stigler's actions are seen as treason in the eyes of some. But others see them as acts of compassion. I can't imagine they affected the outcome of the war. They didn't cause the

Germans to lose. But I have no doubt they softened the attitudes of bitter enemies toward each other, and in some ways helped the cause of peace.

Those actions certainly reflected the teaching of Jesus. And this teaching, we must believe, is the way that leads to life, not death. Loving your enemy is not a teaching of impractical idealism destined only to be trampled upon, but rather a teaching that shows us a better way.

This is one of the points Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. makes in his famous and beautiful sermon on the subject. He says: "far from being an impractical idealist, Jesus has become the practical realist. The words of this text glitter in our eyes with a new urgency. Far from being the pious injunction of a utopian dreamer, this command is an absolute necessity for the survival of our civilization. Yes, it is love that will save our world and our civilization, love even for enemies."

Our Old Testament reading today also reflects the power and triumph of this love. It is a portion of the long narrative in the Book of Genesis about Joseph – the son of Jacob and Rachel, the dreamer, the dream-interpreter and a man of great faith.

As an aside, I am very pleased to see this reading chosen for today – not only because it aligns with the teaching of Jesus so well, but because in the coming weeks, when our season of Lent begins, our midweek

services at St. Paul's will delve deeply into the Joseph stories. In them we will find many parallels with the life and teachings of Jesus. I've purchased and read through the notes – it's going to be a wonderful series.

Today's text shows Joseph brought together with his brothers after many years. Those brothers had despised Joseph and his dreams and sold him into slavery as a youth. But now the tables have turned. Joseph is the powerful one. He can have his revenge. Or mete out a little justice as preferred.

But Joseph forgives his brothers. Even though they had become his enemy. Joseph decided to love them – no doubt partly because they were family, but certainly even more because he knew that God's way is the way of love.

Joseph, we notice, even goes out of his way to comfort these former enemies of his, saying: "And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life." Joseph found the good in what had been done. He looked at life with the eyes of faith.

What about you? Loving your enemies is hard. But you and I can do it because God has first loved us. As our Psalm today reminds us: "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities." His love is shown in his great choice to forgive us.

And that choice is made clear to us as we are told that he "gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." That choice of God's was made in love. "For God so loved the world..." says the text.

When Jesus tells us to love our enemies, he gives us a hard teaching. But he has also shown us the way to do it. And given us reason why his teaching is good.

Martin Luther King Jr. explained his choice this way: "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

And if we need one more reason to love our enemies, we should then hear again the promise Jesus attaches to his command. "Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil."

We don't know all the ways God will reward our acts of faith. The words of Jesus here point to the fact that we become part of God's family, and that our family membership is given despite the fact that we are still often ungrateful and evil.

The scriptures tell us of many more rewards – like the joy of the life to come.

And all this is given because God is merciful. His love is not mere affection. His love extends mercy and forgiveness.

Therefore, "be merciful, even as your father is merciful." So says Jesus. Amen.

- 1 O bless the Lord, my soul
Let all within me join
And aid my tongue to bless His name
Whose favors are divine.
- 2 O bless the Lord, my soul,
Nor let His mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness
And without praises die!
- 3 'Tis He forgives thy sins;
'Tis He relieves thy pain;
'Tis He that heals thy sicknesses
And makes thee young again.
- 4 He crowns thy life with love
When ransomed from the grave;
He that redeemed my soul from hell
Hath sov'reign pow'r to save.
- 5 He fills the poor with good;
He gives the suff'ers rest.
The Lord hath judgments for the proud
And justice for th'oppressed.
- 6 His wondrous works and ways
He made by Moses known,
But sent the world His truth and grace
By His belovèd Son.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH (Stand)

O Lord, Your servant Joseph endured hardship and struggle, yet believed it would come to good. Give us such tested faith, and bring all things to completion according to Your purposes in Christ, the new Adam, who has brought hope to the world. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lead all pastors, missionaries and church workers in faithful service to Your people with compassion and love. Bless every place where we hear Your Word and serve our neighbor in Christ's name. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Help all parents who have brought their children to Christ in the waters of Holy Baptism also to bring them to Him faithfully in the Divine Service, that He may continue to take them in His arms and bless them through His Word. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Let Your love have its way with us, Lord. Lead us to expect no self-interested reward, but to love our enemies and serve those in need. Put an end to all bitterness and strife. Let forgiveness reign between each of us, even as Christ's blood covers our sins before Your heavenly throne. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Uphold civil authority and those responsible to You for the welfare of our nation, state and community. Help them steadfastly to pursue the cause of justice and protect life from beginning to natural end. Guard all first responders and protect those who defend us here or abroad. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort all who suffer, deliver the sick according to Your will, and sustain by Your grace those troubled in body or soul [*especially* _____]. Be with the dying and grant them peace at the last. Give Your comfort to those who grieve [*especially* _____]. Grant Your children patience and courage to endure every time of trial with hope in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the gift of this blessed Sacrament, O Lord. Give us a right heart as we prepare to eat and drink Christ's true body and blood, that by it we would be equipped to love You above all and our neighbors as ourselves. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord God, heavenly Father, You will bring all things to completion according to Your order and time. When Christ comes and all the dead are raised, number us, we pray, among the saints in glory, clothing the perishable with the imperishable and bringing us into eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



THE LITURGY OF HOLY COMMUNION

PREFACE TO HOLY COMMUNION

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 Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good right and salutary...evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

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**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

THE 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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

DISTRIBUTION (Be seated)

The Communion Assistant will come forward to receive first, then those from the pulpit side – by order of pew, front to back. Communicants will come up the center aisle and return via the side aisle. When all from the pulpit side have communed, the baptismal font side will commune in the same manner. Distancing must be maintained between all communicants. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the baskets.

COMMUNION MUSIC

The Tree of Life
Setting: Benjamin M. Culli

- 1 O Lord, now let Your servant
Depart in heav'nly peace,
For I have seen the glory
Of Your redeeming grace:
A light to lead the Gentiles
Unto Your holy hill,
The glory of Your people,
Your chosen Israel.

- 2 All glory to the Father,
All glory to the Son,
All glory to the Spirit,
Forever Three in One;
For as in the beginning,
Is now, shall ever be,
God's triune name resounding
Through all eternity.

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN #697

Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death

- 1 Awake, O sleeper, rise from death,
And Christ shall give you light;
So learn His love, its length and breadth,
Its fullness, depth, and height.

- 2 To us on earth He came to bring
From sin and fear release,
To give the Spirit's unity,
The very bond of peace.

- 3 Then walk in love as Christ has loved,
Who died that He might save;
With kind and gentle hearts forgive
As God in Christ forgave.

- 4 For us Christ lived, for us He died,
And conquered in the strife;
Awake, arise, go forth in faith,
And Christ shall give you life.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (Be seated)

DISMISSAL

Those serving:

Sunday, February 20, 8:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Rich Kauzlarich

Comm. assist: Judy Koucky

Reader: Melissa Hecht

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Michael Chamberlain

Comm. assist: Jill Hecht

Reader: Dale Rogers

Acknowledgements

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