

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
OCTOBER 16, 2022

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

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.



THE ENTRANCE RITE

PRELUDE

Blessed Jesus, at Your Word
Settings: J. Vyhanek

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #904 (Stand)

Blessed Jesus, at Your Word

- 1 Blessed Jesus, at Your Word**
We are gathered all to hear You.
Let our hearts and souls be stirred
Now to seek and love and fear You,
By Your teachings, sweet and holy,
Drawn from earth to love You solely.
- 2 All our knowledge, sense, and sight**
Lie in deepest darkness shrouded
Till Your Spirit breaks our night
With the beams of truth unclouded.
You alone to God can win us;
You must work all good within us.

- 3 Gracious Savior, good and kind,**
Light of Light, from God proceeding,
Open now our heart and mind;
Help us by Your Spirit's pleading.
Hear the cry Your Church now raises;
Hear and bless our prayers and praises.
- 4 Father, Son, and Spirit, Lord,**
Praise to You and adoration!
Grant that we may trust Your Word,
Confident of our salvation,
While we here below must wander,
Till we sing Your praises yonder.

INVOCATION

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your

Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Kneel. Silence is observed for reflection and self-examination.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

KYRIE (Stand)

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:

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison. (*This means "Lord, have mercy."*)

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

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison.

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

Kyrie Eleison; Christe Eleison; Kyrie Eleison.

HYMN OF PRAISE #950

Splendor and Honor

- 1 Splendor and honor, majesty and power
Are Yours, O Lord God, fount of ev'ry blessing,
For by Your bidding was the whole creation
Called into being.**

- 2 Praised be the true Lamb, slain for our redemption,
By whose self-off'ring we are made God's people:
A priestly kingdom, from all tongues and nations,
Called to God's service.**
- 3 To the Almighty, throned in heav'nly splendor,
And to the Savior, Christ our Lamb and Shepherd,
Be adoration, praise, and glory given,
Now and forever.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray. O Lord, almighty and everlasting God,
You have commanded us to pray and have promised to hear us. Mercifully grant that Your Holy Spirit may direct and govern our hearts in all things that we may persevere with steadfast faith in the confession of Your name; 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 32:22-30

The same night [Jacob] arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered."

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

Jubilation Quartet

Old English Prayer- God Be in My Head

J. Rutter

God be in my head and in my understanding.

God be in mine eyes and in my looking.

God be in my mouth and in my speaking.

God be in mine heart and in my thinking.

God be at my end and in my departing.

SECOND LESSON

2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5

As for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(10:30) CHILDREN'S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

Alleluia.

Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 18th chapter
Glory to You, O Lord.

[Jesus] told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.' For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.'" And the Lord said, "Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON (Be seated)

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

I have found over the years that for some reason (I don't know why) I have a fear of bothering people. There will be times when I want to invite somebody to something, or ask them something, but then I'll think to myself: "Oh, I don't want to bother them. Perhaps they won't like that."

I've considered that maybe I feel this way because I, myself, don't like to be bothered. But I don't think that's the case. I'm usually very open to people approaching me. Except, I suppose, for sales calls.

In today's Gospel reading, we heard Jesus tell a parable about a judge who only acted because he was bothered. The judge said: "because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming."

In the parable, the judge represents God. And this might make us wonder if God is then also bothered by those who keep coming to him.

But that's not the point of the parable. The Gospel writer tells us the parable's point right up front, and it has nothing to do with being bothered. The parable's point is that we are to be persistent in our prayer.

God is not bothered by our persistence. If anything, the detail of the judge's feelings is just meant to highlight the contrast between God and man. Men will often need to be goaded and pushed to offer help. But God, on the other hand, will always come through.

About our persistence in prayer, let me share some further thoughts suggested by this reading.

First, we see that Jesus is not commending just any persistence; nor just any prayer. The woman isn't crying out in hopes of becoming healthier, happier or richer. Rather, she is crying out for justice. The woman needs help because she has been wronged.

Jesus, in his explanation of the parable, emphasizes this need of hers for justice. And he repeats it in his teaching, saying: "Will not God give justice to his people who cry to him day and night? He will give justice to them speedily."

God is happy to hear any of our prayers. And he invites us to pray for things we want and not just things we feel we need. We can pray for healing, happiness... and even riches. But God has a particular heart for justice. We know this because of his many comments on the matter, including those we've considered in the past few weeks.

Second, Jesus is not just commending persistent prayer in these verses, but also persistent faith. We see this as Jesus concludes his teaching by saying: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Prayer is always a reflection of faith. People who have no faith don't pray.

That being said, not all prayer problems are faith problems. Sometimes we have plenty of faith but just tire of praying. We give up, thinking God's answer must be "no." These are the times we simply fail to persist.

At other times, however, our lack of persistence betrays a struggle of faith. It becomes a signal to us that our faith is in short supply.

Today's Old Testament reading, from Genesis 32, tells the story of Jacob wrestling with God. The story conveys many messages but was no doubt chosen to be read today

because of its emphasis on struggle. Jacob's literal struggle with God powerfully symbolizes the struggles people often have with their faith.

The immediate application of the story is to Jacob's descendants. God gives Jacob the name "Israel" – which means "struggles with God" – and this name is then incorporated by his descendants in the name for their community. They are the Israelites – those who struggle with God.

And these descendants, we know, did struggle mightily with their faith. The Old Testament is filled with examples of how their faith wavered and was, at times, even abandoned. These are the times when they turned to other gods, neglected to worship as they should, and disobeyed God's commands – living as if he didn't matter to them.

These examples from the scriptures, of course, should lead us to think about ourselves. What about us? What about our faith?

Certainly there are times when we struggle with faith too. Maybe it's in those times when things don't go as we've planned, and especially if we, ourselves, have done nothing wrong. Or maybe it's when God's ways don't seem very effective to us, like when we've tried living as he calls and it's just not getting us where we want to go. Or perhaps it's simply in those times when we feel alone or tired or hurt.

When we pray to God in our times of struggle, he will come and extend his help. He has promised to do so!

But we may need to struggle to see it. And we may need to struggle to accept what he says.

We will need to persist in believing that God will come through for us. And that means persisting in prayer.

A good way to train ourselves for these struggles is to regularly struggle with God's holy Word. In his holy Word God encounters us directly and personally. Here he has things to share with us – some things that will comfort and encourage us and some things which will challenge us.

In today's second reading, St. Paul speaks to Timothy about the importance of being in God's Word. He says: "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have

been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

Notice how Paul connects God’s Word with our salvation, and how this salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

Paul then adds a further thought about the power and purpose of God’s Word, saying: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

Here we note how Paul highlights the Word’s power to train us. It will help us grow in facing our struggles.

And here we should also note how this training includes “reproof and correction.” God will at times need to point out our mistakes and turn us toward the right path.

This is reminiscent of how God dealt with Jacob in our Old Testament reading. There he touched Jacob’s hip and put it out of joint during the struggle. Jacob was commended for struggling, yes. But it also seems Jacob didn’t know when to stop. Jacob’s persistence, we could say, became more of an insistence. So God intervened.

In the same way, God will sometimes need to slow us down or force us to adjust our ways.

This line of thinking reminds me of words found in our hymnal’s liturgy for Individual Confession and Absolution. Using words that echo the idea of struggle, the Confession has us say: “I have not let God’s love have its way with me, and so my love for others has failed.”

Christians are to always let God’s love have its way with us. We are to submit ourselves to its holy and righteous power. That’s the way we are to live.

But too often we don’t. What we often submit to instead is the smooth, easy and delightful talk of others – often someone who desires our attention, or who has something to sell us. We like their clever phrases, affirming statements and entertaining thoughts. We like them so much that we let them have their way with us instead of God’s love.

Paul speaks about this when he goes on to warn Timothy about those who “will not endure sound teaching, but who, having itching ears, will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions.”

And here we should note that the idea of “itching ears” is actually about our desire to have them tickled, not to have an itch scratched. Some people will tickle our ears with their pleasant and desirable statements or promises. And we will enjoy this.

But Paul warns us about this enjoyment, pointing us instead to the sure and truthful words of God. God’s words do much more than tickle our fancy. They lead us on the path of eternal life.

Wrestling with God’s word is done as we honor that word – as it is – and not interpret it as we’d like.

Wrestling with God’s word means embracing its hard teachings too, not just those which please us.

Sometimes our struggles with faith will be quite concerning. These are the times when we are confused, uncertain and feel as if we’ve lost hope. In those times we can take comfort in being God’s “elect.” Jesus said: “will not God give justice to his elect?” Yes. He will.

“God’s elect” are you – you who have been given the gift of faith. Faith has been worked in you by the Holy Spirit. It was given in Baptism and given through God’s Word.

And this faith you have is one that saves not through its own strength but through the promise to which it is attached. It is a faith rooted in the promise of sins forgiven on the cross and resurrected life given through our Lord Jesus. It is a faith given by God to you, for the sake of Jesus.

You, as God’s elect, have been called, foreknown and predestined by God (see Romans 8:28-30). These teachings assure you that God loves you and will not let you go.

Yes, you may walk away from God on your own if you’d like. But God will never leave you nor forsake you.

God is with us in the struggle. He is present to encourage us in persistence. He is there to both hear and answer our prayers.

God will give justice “speedily” according to Jesus. And thankfully, that justice includes the forgiveness of our sins, the loving correction that we need, and the promise of building our faith.

God provides for his people abundantly. Knowing this, let us pray always, and not lose heart.

In the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY #703 (Stand)

How Can I Thank You, Lord

- 1** How can I thank You, Lord,
For all Your loving-kindness,
That You have patiently
Borne with me in my blindness!
When dead in many sins
And trespasses I lay,
I kindled, holy God,
Your anger ev'ry day.
- 2** It is Your work alone
That I am now converted;
O'er Satan's work in me
You have Your pow'r asserted.
Your mercy and Your grace
That rise afresh each morn
Have turned my stony heart
Into a heart newborn.
- 3** Lord, You have raised me up
To joy and exultation
And clearly shown the way
That leads me to salvation.
My sins are washed away;
For this I thank You, Lord.
Now with my heart and soul
All evil I abhor.
- 4** Grant that Your Spirit's help
To me be always given
Lest I should fall again
And lose the way to heaven.
Grant that He give me strength
In my infirmity;
May He renew my heart
To serve You willingly.
- 5** O Father, God of love,
Now hear my supplication;
O Savior, Son of God,
Accept my adoration;
O Holy Spirit, be
My ever faithful guide
That I may serve You here
And there with You abide.

**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

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For persistence in prayer, that as we call to our righteous God day and night, He may grant us faith to rest securely in His justice as we await the coming of the Son of Man, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For faithful church workers and leaders who will answer the call and speak Christ's Word to the lost, the lapsed and the weary, working like faithful Timothy in season and

out; and for all the elect of God that they would be blest in their witness and service to their neighbors, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all parents, that they be strengthened to teach God's Word to their children; and for all children, that they be trained in righteousness and equipped for every good work, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the leaders of the nations, and especially for our own, that they may receive wisdom and understanding from the Lord, punish evil and reward good, and fear God and respect man, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all of us in our times of trouble, that we would be delivered from evil and sustained in faith; and for those who are enduring ongoing illness or challenge, especially those on our prayer list and those we name in our hearts at this time... let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For repentant hearts among all who commune this day, that confident in the protection and grace of Christ, we may receive the pledge of salvation in His body and blood and so be preserved from all evil and guarded in all our ways, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Gracious Lord, You desire us to come to You in prayer and not lose heart in the midst of suffering. As we struggle with many afflictions in this vale of tears, strengthen us by the suffering and cross of Your Son. Have mercy on us when we are overwhelmed by despair and our spirits fail. Renew our faith by the proclamation of the Gospel to cry to You in hope day and night. You are our Keeper. Guard us when death draws near, and grant that we would be found faithful on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY #955 (Stand)

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

**Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
And fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
That we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and the dreams of all;
Unite them with the prayers we offer now.
Grace our table with Your presence, and give us
A foretaste of the feast to come.**



SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

PREFACE

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 that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who on this day overcame death and the grave and by His glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify your glorious name, evermore praising you and saying:

SANCTUS #961

**Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessèd, blessèd, blessèd is He
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. In mercy for our fallen world you gave your only Son, that all those who believe in him should not perish but have eternal life. We give thanks to you for the salvation you have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send now your Holy Spirit into our hearts, that we may receive our Lord with a living faith as he comes to us in his holy supper.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

WORDS OF OUR LORD

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.

PAX DOMINI

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

AGNUS DEI — I #962

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world;

grant us Your peace,

grant us Your peace,

grant us Your peace.

THE COMMUNION (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. We ask that the wine be consumed away from the tray table. Empty cups should be dropped into the receptacles.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

How Can I Thank You, Lord

Setting: M. Reger

NUNC DIMITTIS #937 (Stand)

**1 Lord, bid Your servant go in peace,
Your word is now fulfilled.
These eyes have seen salvation's dawn,
This child so long foretold.**

**2 This is the Savior of the world,
The Gentiles' promised light,
God's glory dwelling in our midst,
The joy of Israel.**

- 3 With saints of old, with saints to come,
To You we lift our voice;
To Father, Son, and Spirit blest
Be honor, love, and praise.**

PRAYER (Stand)

BENEDICTION

SENDING HYMN #834

O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 O God, O Lord of heav'n and earth,
Thy living finger never wrote
That life should be an aimless mote,
A deathward drift from futile birth.
Thy Word meant life triumphant hurled
In splendor through Thy broken world.
Since light awoke and life began,
Thou hast desired Thy life for man.</p> <p>2 Our fatal will to equal Thee,
Our rebel will wrought death and night.
We seized and used in prideful spite
Thy wondrous gift of liberty.
We housed us in this house of doom,
Where death had royal scope and room,
Until Thy servant, Prince of Peace,
Breached all its walls for our release.</p> | <p>3 Thou camest to our hall of death,
O Christ, to breathe our poisoned air,
To drink for us the dark despair
That strangled our reluctant breath.
How beautiful the feet that trod
The road that leads us back to God!
How beautiful the feet that ran
To bring the great good news to man!</p> <p>4 O Spirit, who didst once restore
Thy Church that it might be again
The bringer of good news to men,
Breathe on Thy cloven Church once more,
That in these gray and latter days
There may be those whose life is praise,
Each life a high doxology
To Father, Son, and unto Thee.</p> |
|---|---|

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth
Setting: J. Bender

Those serving:

Sunday, October 16,

8:00 p.m.:

Greeter: Steve Janssen

Comm. assist: Jim Easterly

Reader: Rich Kauzlarich

10:30 a.m.:

Greeter: Janice Sebring

Comm. assist: Jill Hecht

Reader: Dan Buuck

FELLOWSHIP: Board of Evangelism

Acknowledgments

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