



Introduction

God does not promise that the path of the disciple will be easy. Jesus declares that his words may bring stark division. Even so, we need not be afraid for God accounts for each hair on our heads. Though we may experience rejection, frustration, division, and death, God's grace and love make us a new creation each day. Marked with the cross, we are sent from worship to witness to Christ in the world.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity one God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Reconciling God,

**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,
and we deny your presence in our lives.**

We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts.

We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.

We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.

We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us.

We sin in thought, word, and deed.

**By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us;
and in your Spirit, lead us;**

so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,

by the radical abundance of divine mercy

we have peace with God through ✝ Christ Jesus,

through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.

Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope.

For hope does not disappoint,

because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn

How Firm a Foundation

Listen and sing along [here](#)

Prayer of the Day

Teach us, good Lord God, to serve you as you deserve, to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labor and not to ask for reward, except that of knowing that we do your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm: Psalm 69:7-10, 16-18

- ⁷Surely, for your sake I have suffered reproach,
and shame has covered my face.
⁸**I have become a stranger to my own kindred,
an alien to my mother's children.**
⁹Zeal for your house has eaten me up;
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.
¹⁰**I humbled myself with fasting,
but that was turned to my reproach.**
¹⁶**Answer me, O LORD, for your love is kind;
in your great compassion, turn to me.**
¹⁷Hide not your face from your servant;
be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.
¹⁸**Draw near to me and redeem me;
because of my enemies deliver me.**

Second Reading: Romans 6:1b-11

In baptism we were incorporated into the reality of Christ's death and resurrection. We have been made new in Christ through his death and resurrection to live freed from sin.

Read the text [here](#).

Gospel: Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus warns his disciples that their ministry in his name will meet with opposition. However, he assures them that they need not fear for the truth will come to light. Life is found in Christ.

Read the text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

Last week we decided to start a series in Romans, therefore I'll be looking at the text from the second reading today. When I read this text, I was reminded of a song that we sing at camp. It's called *One Name*. Here are the words:

One name, under heaven, whereby we must be saved.
One name, under heaven, whereby we must be saved. (Repeat)

We've been forgiven of our sins, baptized in the water,
Filled with the Holy Ghost and washed by the blood of the lamb. (Repeat)

We're free, really free my friend,
freed by the blood of the lamb. (Repeat)

God's gonna move in this pla-a-a-ace,
God's gonna move in this pla-a-a-ace,
God's gonna turn the world upside down. (Repeat)

In this text, the writer, Paul, has already established that we are saved by grace through faith, and that grace is a free gift to all. Paul asks a rhetorical question, "So does that mean I can do whatever I want?" Paul answers himself with, "No."

In beginning with verse 4, he says, "*Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.*" What Paul is trying to say here is that in the waters of baptism, we have been united with Christ. A moral renewal is a consequence of this union. Sin was drowned in baptism, and we were raised to new life.

Paul is reading his letter to a group of baptized Christians. I feel like today he would say something like, "Y'all can at least *act* like you've been baptized!" That is, living a transformed life in word and deed and not letting sin have a hold over you. As Jesus died on the cross, so did sin. If you have aligned your life with Christ in baptism, you should be living in ways that avoid sin. Open your heart to transformation. Paul believes that you can't live in sin if you are in Christ. Allow yourself to be transformed by the gospel. When we put sin behind us and walk in new life, sin no longer has hold over us and we are participating in our baptismal resurrection.

This week Pastor Ruth Ann and I were talking about a passage that referenced the hardening of heart. For example, in Exodus, Pharaoh's heart was hardened against the Israelites. I said, "Keep your heart squishy and compassionate!" Jesus did this.

I invite you to be curious about what is happening in the world right now. Ask questions and believe the answers that you get. I pray that your heart will be open to hearing other people's stories. I invite you to not be a bystander to the world's problems but to reach out in love. In baptism we've been freed *from* sin, death, and the devil and freed *for* love, compassion, and care toward others. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Special Music

His Eye is on the Sparrow

Listen [here](#).

Apostles' Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

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 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

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

A brief silence.

Expansive God, you bring diverse voices together to form your church. Open our hearts and unstop our ears to learn from one another, that our differences might not overshadow our baptismal unity. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Providing God, your creation shows us that life comes from death. Renew the places where our land, air, and waterways have been ill for too long. Direct the work of all who care for birds and their habitats. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Protecting God, sustain and keep safe all who work to defend others across the world. Revive and strengthen organizations dedicated to caring for refugees and migrants while their homelands struggle for peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you promise to be with all who are persecuted for your sake. Guide all who speak your word of justice and console any who are tormented or targeted for being who they are. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you are with us and we are never alone. Bless all fathers and father figures who strive to love and nurture as you do. Comfort all who long to be fathers and all for whom this day is difficult. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Reigning God, you bless us with guides and caretakers in the faith. As we give thanks for those who have died, increase our care for one another until we walk with them in newness of life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**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.**

Closing Hymn

Faith of our Fathers

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Vicar Natalie Cook.
Special music by Charlotte Maness and Carmella Hedrick.