

Second Sunday after Pentecost

June 14, 2020



Introduction

Jesus sends out the disciples as laborers into the harvest. In baptism we too are anointed for ministry, sharing God's compassion with our needy world. From worship we go forth to proclaim the good news, to heal the sick, and to share our bread with the hungry.

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.**

Special Music

Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing

Listen [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

God of compassion, you have opened the way for us and brought us to yourself. Pour your love into our hearts, that, overflowing with joy, we may freely share the blessings of your realm and faithfully proclaim the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm: Psalm 100

¹Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all you lands!

²Serve the LORD with gladness; come into God's presence with a song.

³**Know that the LORD is God, our maker to whom we belong;
we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.**

⁴Enter the gates of the LORD with thanksgiving and the courts with praise;
give thanks and bless God's holy name.

⁵**Good indeed is the LORD, whose steadfast love is everlasting,
whose faithfulness endures from age to age.**

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

We are no longer God's enemies but have peace with God because we were brought into a right relationship with God through Christ's death.

Read the text [here](#).

Gospel: Matthew 9:35--10:8

The mission of Jesus' followers is to continue the mission of Jesus himself. Here, he instructs his first disciples as to how they might proclaim the gospel through their words and deeds.

Read the text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

Today marks a few different moments in time. It is officially summer – most schools are out, and graduations are over; summer break is officially in session. Summer vacation season has begun – for those of us with a safe place to vacation or an extreme desire to leave home for more than a few errands.

It is also a time of change in the church as we enter that long season after Pentecost, known as the season of ordinary time, or that long season of green paraments. It also means that we begin a long season where our Epistle readings come from Paul's letter to the Romans. For the next many weeks, we hope to plan our sermons as a series on Romans.

Why would we do this, you might ask? For two reasons. One, it is the closest we get to a book of theology in the New Testament. Paul wrote this to a church he did not start and we are not sure that he ever visited. Since he had no face to face time with this church in Rome, Paul had to convey all his theology in a letter.

The second reason is that Luther thought highly of Paul, and his theology, and especially of this letter to the Romans. In Luther's preface to his commentary on Romans, Luther wrote, "This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament, and is truly the purest gospel. It is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but also that he should occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul." (**Annotated Luther**, Vol 6, p. 464)

In his lectures on Romans, Dr. Luther also wrote, "Here the door is thrown open wide for the understanding of Holy Scripture, that is, that everything must be understood in relation to Christ."

The chief topic of Romans for Luther is "the righteousness of God," that is, the righteousness by which God makes sinners righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. (**LW**, 25: xi). If, for Martin Luther, this Epistle is so important as to recommend that we memorize it, then it is fitting that we should at least spend the summer studying it.

Depending on when Easter falls, we begin this part of the lectionary cycle either at the beginning of Romans, or where we are this week – in the 5th chapter. I recommend that you begin your reading at Chapter 1 so that you have heard Paul's words in those verses.

In the early part of Romans, Paul reminds us that "*For there is no distinction, since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" - the reminder that on our own, we are sinful human beings that cannot possibly ever be saved, not without divine intervention. Then Paul tells us that "God's righteousness has been disclosed" and that we "*are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" (3:23-24)

So what does this mean for us, here in this modern world, in the midst of a pandemic and social unrest? It is, first and foremost, a reminder that our salvation does not come from what we do or say, but from God, through Christ, who justifies us as a gift of grace. Our salvation is assured, but that does not in any way, shape, or form let us off the hook.

Since we are justified by faith, **and** are to boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God, we are required (not asked, or suggested to, but required) to follow the commandments of Jesus, through whom we are saved. Those commandments are to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your mind, and all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself.

We do not get off easy. Because of what God, through Christ, has done for us, we are required to do much for one another. Loving one another is not easy – we know that, but that does not give us the option to not love one another. And loving one another does not mean just those like us, those we know, those we feel sorry for, but to love **all** others. We are to love those near and far; those alike and those who are very different. There is no end to God’s love, and therefore there can be no end to our love for one another. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ – no matter what we think, no matter what our politicians tell us, no matter what anyone says. God created us all in his image, and Jesus died for us all – **each and every one of us**.

Paul goes on to remind us that “*we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,⁴ and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,⁵ and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*” (5:3)

Now we all know a bit more about suffering that we did before March of this year. We have suffered stay at home, shortages of critical supplies, and we may feel that our freedom has suffered as well. But Paul tells us that suffering is part of life, especially part of Christian life. We do not suffer as the early Christians did, where just quoting Paul or Jesus might get them fed to the lions or hung. We have suffered, but we have not suffered for our faith.

We have suffered together – with our neighbors – with our brothers and sisters in Christ. And rather than complain about our suffering, we should learn from it. Suffering produces endurance, so that we can get through – one day at a time. Endurance produces character – so that we do not lash out at others, but stop and take a breath, and then pray for them. Character produces hope, because our hope is not in getting a haircut, or sitting in a restaurant, but our hope is in Christ. Our hope is in God’s love that has been poured into us through the Holy Spirit. Hope is what gives us strength to endure. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Gathering Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Listen and sing along [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.

Holy One, you bring us together and call us your own. Bless theologians, teachers, and preachers who help us grow in faith. Guide your church, that we might be a holy people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, the whole earth is yours. Where there is fire, bring cool air and new growth. Where there is flooding, bring abatement. Where there is drought, bring rain. Inspire us to care for what you have provided. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, we have created divisions you will not own. In places of conflict, raise up leaders who work to develop lasting peace and reconciliation. Encourage organizations and individuals who care for all during these troubled times. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, you care for those who are harassed and helpless. Protect and defend those who are abused. Heal those who are sick. Feed all who hunger. Empower all whose voices go unheard, and help us respond to the pressing needs of our neighbors. We pray especially for those we name now. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy One, you provide a plentiful harvest of gifts and resources. Prepare us to labor and gather the fruits of this congregation, that we might discover new ways of living. Minister to us in our work, that we do not lose heart. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Holy One, you bring all people to yourself. We give thanks for the holy people who have gone before us. Sustain us in your mission until the day you bear us up to join the saints in light. 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

I Love to Tell the Story

Listen and sing along [here](#).

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.
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