

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
Aitkin, Minnesota
July 3, 2022
The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
ONLINE ORDER OF WORSHIP

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord,

C **and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P O almighty God, merciful Father,

C **I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.**

P Upon this your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Introit

The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,*
and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.
Day to day | pours out speech,*
and night to night reveals | knowledge.
Their measuring line goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end | of the world.*
In them he has set a tent | for the sun,
which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his |
chamber,*
and, like a strong man, runs its | course with joy.
Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit
to the | end of them,*
and there is nothing hidden | from its heat.

**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God,*
and the sky above proclaims his | handiwork.

Collect of the Day

Proper 9 (Year C)

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives

and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 66:10–14

“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her;
that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;
that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious abundance.”

For thus says the LORD:

“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing
stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her
hip,
and bounced upon her knees.
As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his
servants,
and he shall show his indignation against his
enemies.”

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.

One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. . . .

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Luke 10:1–20

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you,

Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

Apostles' Creed

C **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.**

Sermon Text – Galatians 6:1-10, 14-18

Theme – “Boasting in the Cross of Christ”

Maybe you have heard the story about a lion who thought he was perfect in every way. As a result it was his practice to wander around the jungle asking everyone he met: “Who is the King of jungle?” When he met a zebra, he’d ask, “Who’s the King of jungle?” The zebra would be quick to reply, “You are the King!” And, the lion was happy. When the lion came upon a chimpanzee, he’d ask, “Who’s the King of the jungle?” Of course, the chimp knew how to answer that question, “None other than you, your highness.” When the lion encountered a giraffe, again he’d ask, “Who’s the King of the jungle?” And since the giraffe knew what was best for him, he too would answer, “You are!”

Then, one day, the lion met an elephant. He had never seen an elephant before, but that didn’t stop him from asking, “Who’s the King of jungle?” Without a word, the elephant answered the lion’s question. You see, the elephant reached out his trunk and grabbed the lion by the tail, picked him up, twirled him around a few times, before throwing him in a pool of dirty water. As the elephant walked away, the lion managed to say, “Just because you don’t know the answer, doesn’t mean that you have to get nasty about it.”

You might say, that lion had a “pride problem,” with no pun intended.

Sometimes, you and I have a “pride problem.” We all can find something to boast about. With this being the 4th of July weekend, we can remember that one thing that we Americans sometimes boast about is the freedom we have – freedom that is good, freedom that allows us to come and worship. I think, we Americans start to have a “pride problem” when we, like the lion, start to think that our nation is “king,” not just “king of the jungle,” but “king of the world” and then treat others in the world accordingly.

Today, we end a series of epistle lessons from the book of Galatians. “Freedom” is something St. Paul talked about in last week’s epistle lesson. But, the freedom that St. Paul is talking about is not political freedom that you and I have as Americans; no, the freedom that St. Paul is talking about is spiritual freedom. The greatest freedom of all is knowing that we have the forgiveness of sins through Jesus. We have this freedom because He paid the price for all of our sin. It is all because of God’s love. But you know, this spiritual freedom can come under attack in one of two ways.

The first way that this spiritual freedom comes under attack is when someone suggests that in order to have this freedom we have to add something to what Christ has done – something I do or feel or some tradition that I must follow.

The other threat to our spiritual freedom is when we think that freedom in Christ means that we can indulge the sinful nature, as if we have a license to sin, because we know that we can always turn to the Lord and he will forgive.

That's the threat that St. Paul addresses in our text which begins: **"¹Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."**

We have a responsibility to one another. We don't want each other to be **"caught"** in any kind of sin. It can happen. Someone gets in the grip of some particular sin. Maybe the sin someone is "caught in" could be called an "addiction." There are all kinds of addictions: addiction to drugs and alcohol, addiction to pleasure and power. It's not good when someone is caught up in that kind of sin. Maybe the sin someone is "caught in" is an anger issue. We sometimes say "someone has a chip on their shoulder." Maybe the sin someone is "caught in" has to do with how one talks about other people's sin, whatever that sin might be. Do you know anyone caught in the sin of gossip? What our text is saying is that when someone we know is caught up in sin it is our job to restore that person gently.

All the while we had better **"Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."** We had better make sure that we don't have a "pride problem." That's why St. Paul says, **"³For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor."** When we compare ourselves to others, it is easy to develop a "pride problem." We are going to see their faults quicker than we are going to see our own. Make no mistake about it – we have our own faults –

faults for which we need forgiveness – forgiveness which is there for us in Jesus Christ and in Him alone.

We have nothing to boast about except in the cross of Jesus Christ. That’s what St. Paul is talking about in verse 14 of our text: **“¹⁴But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”**

It is through the cross of Jesus Christ that we are free. We are free even though some say we aren’t good enough Christians to be saved. To us St. Paul says, “Don’t believe it.” We just need to look to the cross where Jesus paid the price for our sin. We are nothing; Jesus is everything! That’s why if we are going to boast – we are not to boast in ourselves, but in Him who gave His life so that we could have freedom. That’s what makes Him King, King of the jungle, King of the world.
AMEN

P The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Church

Almighty and eternal God, You are worthy to be held in reverence by all people. We give You our most humble and hearty thanks for the immeasurable blessings You have bestowed upon us, unworthy and undeserving though we be. Bring us to the acknowledgment of Your grace and goodness, and fill our hearts with the desire to worship You above all things and to serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives.

We praise You for making and preserving all things, but most especially for making known to us Your saving Word and

Holy Sacraments and preserving our lives and Your whole Church through these Means of Grace. Bring to all Your Church unity of doctrine and life together, and raise up pastors who will preach Your Word faithfully and care for Your flock faithfully. Send forth Your Spirit, that all who hear may believe and all those believing may live good and holy lives in accordance with Your will and purpose. Raise up those who will serve within the vineyard of Your Church in the various callings appropriate to their gifts and abilities and in accordance with Your will.

Keep us in repentance and faith, that we may not depart from Christ, the way, the truth and the life. Bring to repentance all enemies of Your Church and those who do not yet know You, that by faith they may confess Jesus Christ as Lord with us and amend their lives by the power of Your gracious Spirit. Give us courage for the path set before us, that we may not faint or grow weary but endure to the day of Christ's coming and receive the blessed "Well done" of Your favor when we enter through Christ to everlasting life.

Lend Your grace and Spirit to the nations and those who lead them, but especially our president; the Congress of these United States; our governor; the legislature; and all who make, administer and judge our laws. Teach us to contend for the faith within the public square so that Your voice may be heard by all people. Inspire and equip us by Your Spirit, that we may be led to every virtue in character and holiness of life.

Defend us from all disaster, both natural and man-made, from scarcity and famine, from war and violence, and from every danger. Give to the land fruitfulness and prosper all lawful labor, that the hungry may be fed, the homeless given shelter, the abused safety and the poor relief. Guide us to use the precious gift of liberty for noble purpose and for the love and care of our neighbor.

Accept now, we pray, our bodies for Your service, with our minds, talents and abilities, together with the offerings we bring, for this is our reasonable service and our duty and delight. Keep us from looking back with longing and from the fear of the future

so that we may live upright and holy lives in the days You give us, manifesting the fruits of the Spirit and walking in Your ways both now and forever.

Though we are but sojourners upon this earth, we pray You to grant us safety and strength in all our travels and most especially for the journey of this mortal life. Until that day when we rest in Your presence and know the fullness of Your promise, when all things will be brought to their perfect consummation and bliss, keep us in Christ, holy and blameless in Him, in whose name we pray. With the Father and the Spirit, You are one God, both now and forevermore. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

COur 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.**

Benediction

PThe Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be
gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you
peace.

CAmen

Acknowledgments

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