

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

I Forgive You
September 16 & 17, 2023

AS WE GATHER

This weekend on the Church calendar (September 16), the bishop Cyprian of Carthage is remembered. As a Church leader in the third century, a time of Roman persecution, Cyprian had to deal with the problem of Christians who denied the faith under persecution but later wanted to be restored to the fellowship of the Lord. Cyprian helped craft a response to the situation that was based on forgiveness, allowing a lapsed Christian to be reinstated after a time in which they lived out their restored faithful confession. His own faithfulness unto death was fully demonstrated as he was executed by Roman authorities for his Christian beliefs in AD 258. Speaking words of forgiveness and living them out can come with a price—but is Christlike in every way!

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

WELCOME

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children.
Ephesians 4:32-5:1

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #915 "Today Your Mercy Calls Us"

Today your mercy calls us To wash away our sin.
However great our trespass, Whatever we have been.
However long from mercy Our hearts have turned away,
Your precious blood can wash us And make us clean today.

Today your gate is open, And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome And pardon for their sin.
The past shall be forgotten, A present joy be giv'n,
A future grace be promised, A glorious crown in heav'n.

Today our Father calls us; His Holy Spirit waits;
His blessed angels gather Around the heav'nly gates.
No question will be asked us How often we have come;
Although we oft have wandered, It is our Father's home.

O all-embracing Mercy, O ever-open Door,
What should we do without you When heart and eye run o'er?
When all things seem against us, To drive us to despair,
We know one gate is open, One ear will hear our prayer.

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

People: sing the glory of His name; give to Him glorious praise!

Pastor: Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! . . .

People: All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name."

Pastor: Come and see what God has done:

People: He is awesome in His deeds toward the children of man.

Pastor: Bless our God, O peoples;

People: let the sound of His praise be heard.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us now confess our sin to God, our merciful Father.

People: O most gracious God, we admit and confess our sinfulness. We know well that we are by nature sinful and unclean. Daily we have done things we ought not to have done and have not done that which we are to have been doing as your faithful servants. At times we have been unforgiving and loveless and careless in the stewardship of your creation. We deserve your punishment in this life and for eternity. Trusting in your mercy, we come to you for forgiveness. Our trust is not in ourselves but in the merits of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Have mercy on us, O God. Grant us remission of all our sins and guide us into renewed lives that reflect your goodness and love.

Pastor: God is indeed gracious and merciful and hears our supplications. By the command of my Lord Jesus Christ and as He called and ordained servant, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

☩ WORD ☩

HYMN

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Refrain: *This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God. *Refrain*

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are His. *Refrain*

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen. *Refrain*

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.
This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. O God, you are always ready to hear the prayers of your people. Grant that we may with all boldness and courage bring to you our petitions with the assurance that for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ you will hear them, forgiving our trespasses and granting us your guidance in this life and every blessing in the life to come. This we ask through the same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Genesis 50:15–21* (Joseph and his brothers)

⁵When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him." ¹⁶So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.'" And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, "Behold, we are your servants." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones." Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 14:1–12* (We belong to the Lord.)

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ²One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

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⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. ⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. ¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; ¹¹ for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." ¹² So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 18:21–35* (The parable of the servant who would not forgive)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the eighteenth chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. ²³ "Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.' ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

CHILDREN'S SONG & CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

"Jesus Loves the Little Children"

TOSBB 19

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world;
Red and yellow, black and white, They are precious in His sight;
Jesus loves the little children of the world. *Repeat*

SERMON HYMN #501 "Come Down, O Love Divine"

Come down, O Love divine; Seek Thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with Thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near; Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, Till worldly passions turn
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity Mine outward vesture be
And lowliness become mine inner clothing-
True lowliness of heart, Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong, With which the soul will long,
Shall far out-pass the pow'r of human telling;
No soul can guess His grace Till it become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

SERMON

(Rise)

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.

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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.

(Be seated)

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Heavenly Father, in your mercy you have forgiven our insurmountable debt of sin, ransoming us with the death of your Son. Free us from our grudges and unforgiving nature, lest through our lack of mercy we exclude ourselves from your forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Almighty God, as you kept Joseph from evil and brought good from his suffering in Egypt, deliver us by your grace so that we may learn patience in trials. Teach us to be slow to judge, quick to forgive, and steadfast in love for you and one another. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We praise you, O Lord, for retaining among us your Holy Word and Sacraments. Continue to raise up faithful stewards of your mysteries, that repentance and the forgiveness of sins in Christ's name would be proclaimed in our midst and throughout the world. Prepare your baptized children to be faithful confessors of the hope that is in them. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Loving Lord, comfort those who mourn especially Audrey Spitzer mourning the passing of Jerry; Tim Odor and Dawn Ziolecki mourning the passing of Tim's mother Barbara, and Linda Key mourning the passing of her daughter, Caitlin. Also be with Marilyn Sorcic as she remembers her daughter Trish. Be with them as they mourn, comforting them with the peace that surpasses all understanding that only you can give. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Caring Father, visit the homes of your people. Keep them from all harm and danger, and grant that we would dwell together in peace under the protection of your holy angels. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: God of power and might, sustain the nations of the earth and lead them in the way of justice and truth. Defend life and liberty, and give us honest and faithful rulers, that our nation may strive toward what is honorable, true and just. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, according to your will grant healing to the sick and infirm especially Janice, Bill, Marga, Nadia, Chris, Ardis, Noah, Guy, Mike, Don, Pat, Shirley, Tom, Jill, Janet, Norma, Vern, Amy, Cathy, Cindy, Dorothy, Helga, Carol, June, Shirley and Sarah. Grant them patience to endure their time of suffering, and crown their days with your mercy. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Merciful God, though we come to your table as servants who owe a debt we cannot pay, your Son has forgiven it in its entirety. As we receive His very body and blood for our forgiveness, let us be grateful and go out to serve others with the same spirit of forgiveness. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Hear us, heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

People: 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.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

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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 peace.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN #721

“Lead Me, Guide Me”

**Refrain: Lead me, guide me, along the way; For if You lead me, I cannot stray.
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

I am weak and I need Thy strength and pow’r To help me over my weakest hour.
Help me through the darkness Thy face to see. Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain*

Help me tread in the paths of righteousness, Be my aid when Satan and sin
oppress. I am putting all my trust in Thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain*

I am lost if You take Your hand from me, I am blind without Thy light to see.
Lord, always let me Thy servant be. Lead me, O Lord, lead me. *Refrain*

HYMN #625 “Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread”

Lord Jesus Christ, life giving bread, May I in grace possess You.

Let me with holy food be fed. In hunger I address You.

Prepare me well for You, O Lord, And, humbly by my prayer implored,
Give me Your grace and mercy.

To pastures green, Lord, safely guide, To restful waters lead me;
Your table well for me provide, Your wounded hand now feed me.

Though weary, sinful, sick, and weak, Refuge in You alone I seek,
To share Your cup of healing.

O bread of heav’n, my soul’s delight, For full and free remission
I come with prayer before Your sight In sorrow and contrition.
Your righteousness, Lord, cover me That I receive You worthily,
Assured of Your full pardon.

I do not merit favor, Lord, My weight of sin would break me;
In all my guilty heart’s discord, O Lord, do not forsake me.
In my distress this comforts me That You receive me graciously,
O Christ, my Lord of mercy!

HYMN #696

“O God, My Faithful God”

O God, my faithful God, True fountain ever flowing,
Without whom nothing is, All perfect gifts bestowing;
Give me a healthy frame, And may I have within
A conscience free from blame, A soul unstained by sin.

Grant me the strength to do With ready heart and willing
Whatever You command, My calling here fulfilling;
That I do what I should While trusting You to bless
The outcome for my good, For You must give success.

Keep me from saying words That later need recalling;
Guard me lest idle speech May from my lips be falling;
But when within my place I must and ought to speak,
Then to my words give grace Lest I offend the weak.

Lord, let me win my foes With kindly words and actions,
And let me find good friends For counsel and correction,
Help me, as You have taught, To love both great and small
And by Your Spirit’s might To live in peace with all.

Let me depart this life Confiding in my Savior;
By grace receive my soul That it may live forever;
And let my body have A quiet resting place
Within a Christian grave; And let it sleep in peace.

And on that final day When all the dead are waking,
Stretch out Your mighty hand, My deathly slumber breaking.
Then let me hear Your voice, Redeem this earthly frame,
And bid me to rejoice With those who love Your name.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. Grant, O Lord, that this Sacrament that we have now received strengthen us in faith, faith demonstrated in loving service to one another and marked by forgiveness and care. As we have shared in the hospitality of your Table, enable us to live each day as your people who are given to hospitality, charity, and service in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The 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.

People: **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN #763 "When Peace, Like a River"

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;
When sorrows, like sea billows, roll;
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul, It is well with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.
It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

11 continued

He lives oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

And, Lord, haste the day when our faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;
Even so it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul, It is well, it is well with my soul.

Preacher
Liturgist
Lectors
Organist

Pastor Josh Grotelueschen
Pastor Harold Bender
Marc Stefanic, Grant Gundersen, Jim Laux
Jo Bender

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