

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

What Good Is It?

September 4 & 5, 2021

AS WE GATHER

We focus today on the words of James, which call us to an active faith that loves our neighbors. We are forced to ask ourselves: What good is a faith that bears no fruit of love and service to others? Such a question might make us worry about our salvation. Friends in Christ: do not fear; your living, saving faith in Christ will inevitably overflow with His good works. Christ powerfully works in us as we live out our daily vocations. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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

"Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,
not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some,
but encouraging one another,
and all the more as you see the Day drawing near." (Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV)

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✠ PREPARATION ✠

OPENING HYMN #906 "O Day of Rest and Gladness"

O day of rest and gladness, O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness, Most beautiful, most bright;
This day the high and lowly, Through ages joined to bless, Sing,
"Holy, holy, holy," The triune God confess.

This day at earth's creation The light first had its birth;
This day for our salvation Christ rose from depths of earth;
This day our Lord victorious The Spirit sent from heav'n,
And thus this day most glorious A threefold light was giv'n.

1 continued

This day, God's people meeting, His Holy Scripture hear;
His living presence greeting, Through bread and wine made near.
We journey on, believing, Renewed with heav'nly might,
From grace more grace receiving, On this blest day of light.

(Rise)

That light our hope sustaining, We walk the pilgrim way,
At length our rest attaining, Our endless Sabbath day.
We sing to Thee our praises, O Father, Spirit, Son;
The Church her voice upraises To Thee, blest Three in One.

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: Praise the LORD, O my soul!

People: I will praise the LORD as long as I live.

Pastor: Blessed are those whose hope is in the LORD;

People: the LORD sets the prisoners free.

Pastor: The LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

People: The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down.

Pastor: The LORD upholds the widow and the fatherless.

People: The LORD will reign forever!

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Yes, the Lord reigns over every nation, language, and people. Yet, we have not loved all people as Christ has loved us. The fruits of our faith are not always evident. But our Lord is gracious and merciful, and He offers His forgiveness to all.

Silence for reflection.

Pastor: Heavenly Father,

People: we have failed to love others as you love them. We have failed to reflect your grace to the world in service and sacrifice. We have failed in our actions and in our unwillingness to act. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may follow you in joy. Amen.

✠ WORD ✠

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy sent Jesus Christ into our world to serve and save all people, showing no partiality or favoritism. By His death, He forgives all our sins. By His resurrection, He destroys death forever and offers us eternal life. Therefore, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen. We are forgiven in Christ. We set free to love and serve our neighbors. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

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To God on high be glory And peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven Proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless you, Father; Your holy name, we sing –
Our thanks for your great glory, Lord God, our Heav'nly King.

To You, O solebegotten, The Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior, You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus; Receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in pow'r are seated At God's right hand on high.

For You alone are holy; You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever, Be worshipped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit Alone are Lord Most High.
In God the Father's glory. "Amen!" our glad reply.

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, your grace and mercy overflow to all people. Lead us to love our neighbors, regardless of their differences from us, so that all people might know the good news of your death and resurrection for their eternal life and salvation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 35:4–7a* (God will come and restore all things.) Say to those who have an anxious heart, "Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water;

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *James 2:1–10, 14–18* (What good is a dead faith?)

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. 2 For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, 3 and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or, "Sit down at my feet," 4 have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? 7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? 8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. 9 But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

ANTHEM

"Who You Say I Am?"

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 7:24–37* (Jesus heals a deaf man in the Decapolis.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the seventh chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁴ And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. ²⁵ But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸ But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." ²⁹ And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." ³⁰ And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone. ³¹ Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. ³² And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. ³³ And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. ³⁴ And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵ And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶ And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. ³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

CHILDREN'S SONG & CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

"My God Is So Great"

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty,
there's nothing my God cannot do. (Repeat)

The mountains are His, the rivers are His,
the stars are His handiwork too.

My God is so great, so strong and so mighty,
there's nothing my God cannot do, for you!

SERMON HYMN #848 "Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service"

Lord, whose love through humble service Bore the weight of human need,
who upon the cross, forsaken, Offered mercy's perfect deed,
We, your servants, bring the worship Not of voice alone, but heart,
Consecrating to your purpose Ev'ry gift that you impart.

Still your children wander homeless; Still the hungry cry for bread;
Still the captives long for freedom; Still in grief we mourn the dead.
As, O Lord, your deep compassion Healed the sick and freed the soul,
Use the love your Spirit kindles Still to save and make us whole.

As we worship, grant us vision, Till your love's revealing light
In its height and depth and greatness, Dawns upon our quickened sight,
Making known the needs and burdens your compassion bids us bear,
Stirring us to tireless striving, your abundant life to share.

Called by worship to your service, Forth in your dear name we go,
to the child, the youth, the aged, Love in living deeds to show;
Hope and health, goodwill and comfort, counsel, aid, and peace we give,
that your servants, Lord, in freedom May your mercy know and live.

SERMON

"Faith Active in Love"

James 2:1-10, 14-18

(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.

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)

OFFERING 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 book along to others in your pew, and return the book to the center aisle. You may check the register to see the 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.

Brief silence for personal intercession

Pastor: Heavenly Father, in Holy Baptism you have caused waters to break forth in the wilderness and made streams in the desert of this world. Open our eyes to this new life in Christ, that we may seek to love our neighbors in word and deed.

People: Empower us by the Holy Spirit to walk the paths of righteousness, to help and serve others in need, and to loose our tongues to speak to others of your great salvation.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, you have made us all heirs of your kingdom through Holy Baptism. Grant us all hearts that acknowledge His grace is for all, both for those of low position and high position in this world.

People: Keep us from showing partiality and making distinctions among ourselves, and make us rich in good works.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, you have given us many gifts and abilities to use in the workplace. Help us to do our work with all our hearts, as serving the Lord.

People: Thank you for this Labor Day weekend and the rest provided from our labors.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, create and sustain in us a lively faith in Christ Jesus, and lead us by your Spirit to be active in all good works.

People: Grow us up in our salvation, that we may think of others instead of ourselves and live selfless lives of service.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, help parents to raise up their children to know you as their help and hope, that they may not put their trust in princes in whom there is no salvation.

People: Bless the leaders of our nation. Where they fail, grant them grace. Move them to look to you for wisdom, guidance, and help.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, behold graciously the sick and those in any need especially Jack, Cindy, Deanna, Helga, Steve, Ray, Versa, Don, Judy, Nancy, Dorothy, Steve, Marilyn, Cindy, Louis, Dawn, Carol, Debbie, Mary, Diane, June, Jerry, Shirley, Sarah, Gladys, Shirley and Sarah. Grant them healing in accord with your will.

People: Be their comfort, their strength, and their hope.

Pastor: Heavenly Father, grant that all who come to the Lord's Supper this day would do so in repentance and faith for the forgiveness of sins and in the unity of a true confession.

People: Grant us all sincerity of heart, deep conviction of faith, and move us to live in the freedom of your grace, following your will.

Pastor: All these things and whatever else you know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God 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.

HYMN “Lamb of God, Your Blood Has Bought Us”

Lamb of God, Your blood has bought us.
We are freed from sin and shame.
Lamb of God, Your mercy taught us
How to pray, praise, and proclaim.
Help us, Lord, to show compassion
Without prejudice or spite.
Share Your peace, Lord, without ration,
Helping us reflect Your light.

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(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION

HYMN #704 “Renew Me, O Eternal Light”

Renew me, O eternal Light, And let my heart and soul be bright,
Illumined with the light of grace That issues from your holy face.

Remove the pow’r of sin from me And cleanse all my impurity
That I may have the strength and will Temptations of the flesh to still.

Create in me a new heart, Lord, That gladly I obey your Word.
Let what you will be my desire, And with new life my soul inspire.

Grant that I only you may love And seek those things which are above
Till I behold you face to face, O Light eternal, through your grace.

HYMN #703 “How Can I thank You, Lord”

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 every day.

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 a fresh each morn
Have turned my stony heart Into a heart newborn.

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.

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.

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.

HYMN #555 “Salvation Unto Us Has Come”

Salvation unto us has come By God’s free grace and favor;
Good works cannot avert our doom, They help and save us never.
Faith looks to Jesus Christ alone, Who did for all the world atone;
He is our one Redeemer.

What God did in His Law demand And none to Him could render
Caused wrath and woe on ev’ry hand For man, the vile offender.
Our flesh has not those pure desires The spirit of the Law requires,
And lost is our condition.

It was a false, misleading dream That God His Law had given
That sinners could themselves redeem And by their works gain heaven.
Our flesh has not those pure desires The spirit of the Law requires,
And lost is our condition.

From sin our flesh could not abstain, Sin held its sway unceasing;
The task was useless and in vain, Our guilt was e’er increasing.
None can remove sin’s poisoned dart Or purify our guileful heart-
So deep is our corruption.

Yet as the Law must be fulfilled Or we must die despairing,
Christ came and has God's anger stilled, Our human nature sharing.
He has for us the Law obeyed And thus the Father's vengeance stayed
Which over us impended.

Since Christ has full atonement made And brought to us salvation,
Each Christian therefore may be glad And build on this foundation.
Your grace alone, dear Lord, I plead, Your death is now my life indeed,
For You have paid my ransom.

Let me not doubt, but truly see Your Word cannot be broken;
Your call rings out, "Come unto Me!" No falsehood have You spoken.
Baptized into Your precious name, My faith cannot be put to shame,
And I shall never perish.

The Law reveals the guilt of sin And makes us conscience-stricken;
But then the Gospel enters in The sinful soul to quicken.
Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live; The Law no peace can ever give,
No comfort and no blessing.

Faith clings to Jesus' cross alone And rests in Him unceasing;
And by its fruits true faith is known, With love and hope increasing.
For faith alone can justify; Works serve our neighbor and supply
The proof that faith is living.

All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace; All glory to His merit.
O triune God in heav'n above, You have revealed Your saving love;
Your blessed name we hallow.

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to you, almighty God, that you have renewed us by the body and blood of Christ. Empower and energize us to serve our neighbors in faith toward you and fervent love toward all people; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

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 #691 "Fruitful Trees, the Spirit's Sowing"

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's sowing, May we ripen and increase,
Fruit to life eternal growing, Rich in love and joy and peace.

Laden branches freely bearing Gifts the Giver loves to bless;
Here is fruit that grows by sharing, Patience, kindness, gentleness.

Rooted deep in Christ our Master, Christ our pattern and our goal,
Teach us, as the years fly faster, Goodness, faith, and self control.

Fruitful trees, the Spirit's tending, May we grow till harvests cease;
Till we taste, in life unending, Heaven's love and joy and peace.

Preacher & Liturgist
Lectors
Director of Parish Music

Pastor Harold Bender
Jodi Drew, Jim Laux
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