
16th Sunday after Pentecost

10 a.m.

September 20, 2020



Discomfort: Sign of Grace?

Poor Jonah. The guy never could get comfortable. He was uncomfortable with his God-given call to preach to Nineveh; he was uncomfortable in the arms of the sailors as they hoisted him over the boat's edge and tossed him into the sea; he was uncomfortable as the ocean's raging waves flung him about like flotsam; he was—undoubtedly—uncomfortable in the fish's belly; and he was uncomfortable and downright angry with God's mercy on the people of Nineveh. Jonah had a hard time getting comfortable with himself, and, even more so, Jonah was uneasy embracing the wideness of God's grace.

The same can be said about the laborers in Jesus' parable here in Matthew 20. The laborers who came in the early morning hours grumbled against the landowner because they were paid the same as others who started later and worked fewer hours. These laborers are ill-at-ease with the landowner's choice "to give to this last the same as I give to you." Like Jonah, they are uncomfortable with the unchecked mercy offered by the landowner/God. God doesn't play by our rules, and that can be very discomfoting for us all.

Our discomfort with grace manifests itself in all sorts of ways. It can be discomfoting for us to engage the poor and the outcast of our society. It can be discomfoting for us to welcome immigrants into our communities. It can be discomfoting to address the pervasive racism that still surrounds us. And it can be very discomfoting for us to open our lives to the transforming power of the cross of Christ, whereby "the last will be first, and the first will be last" (Matt. 20:16).

Could it be that the more uncomfortable we become with the reckless love of God, the closer we are to understanding the meaning of grace?

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PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

C **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Faithful God,

C **have mercy on us.**

**We confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.**

**We turn from your loving embrace
and go our own ways.**

**We pass judgment on one another
before examining ourselves.**

We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.

We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.

Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,

and turn us again to life in you

through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P God hears the cries of all who call out in need,
and through his death and resurrection,
Christ has made us his own.

Hear the truth that God proclaims:

Your sins are forgiven in the name of † Jesus Christ.

Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness

to do God's work in the world.

C **Amen.**

All Are Welcome

- 1 Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

Refrain

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

- 2 Let us build a house where prophets speak,
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus: *Refrain*

- 3 Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us: *Refrain*

- 4 Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger: *Refrain*

- 5 Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed

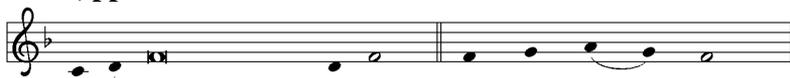
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter: *Refrain*

***GREETING**

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

***KYRIE, pp. 138-139**



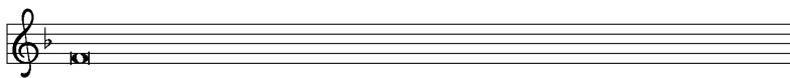
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



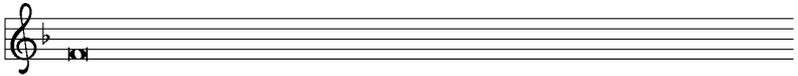
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE, pp. 139-140**



Assisting minister

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.



All

Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;

you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,

in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray together.

C **Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

Amen.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE (Please stay seated)

FIRST READING: Jonah 3:10--4:11

¹⁰When God saw what [the people of Ninevah] did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

^{4:1}But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴And the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade,

waiting to see what would become of the city.

⁶The LORD God appointed a bush, and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

⁹But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?” And he said, “Yes, angry enough to die.” ¹⁰Then the LORD said, “You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?”

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalms 145:1-8

¹I will exalt you, my | God and king,
and bless your name forev- | er and ever.

²**Every day | will I bless you
and praise your name forev- | er and ever.**

³Great is the LORD and greatly | to be praised!
There is no end | to your greatness.

⁴**One generation shall praise your works | to another
and shall de- | clare your power.**

⁵I will speak of the glorious splendor | of your majesty
and all your | marvelous works.

⁶**They shall tell of the might of your | wondrous acts,
and I will re- | count your greatness.**

⁷They shall publish the remembrance of | your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully | of your righteousness.

⁸**The LORD is gracious and full | of compassion,
slow to anger and abounding in | steadfast love.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:21-30

²¹For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²²If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I

prefer. ²³I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; ²⁴but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

²⁷Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, ²⁸and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—³⁰since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION, p. 142**

***GOSPEL: Matthew 20:1-16**

P The holy gospel according to Matthew the 20th chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage. ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more;

but each of them also received the usual daily wage. ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?’ ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

P The gospel of the Lord.
C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 660

Lift High the Cross

Refrain

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

- 1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,
our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God. *Refrain*
- 2 All newborn servants of the Crucified
bear on their brows the seal of him who died. *Refrain*
- 3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
as thou hast promised, draw us all to thee. *Refrain*
- 4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:
praise to the Crucified for victory! *Refrain*

*CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

**He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
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**

Petitions conclude saying “God of mercy,” and the congregation is invited to respond, “**Hear our prayer.**”

***PEACE**

P The peace of Christ be with you always.
C **And also with you.**

OFFERING HYMN

Jesus Loves Me

ELW 595

1 Jesus loves me! this I know,
for the Bible tells me so;
little ones to him belong,
they are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain

Yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
yes, Jesus loves me,
the Bible tells me so.

2 Jesus loves me! he who died
heaven’s gates to open wide;
he will wash away my sin,
let his little child come in. *Refrain*

3 Jesus loves me! loves me still,
though I’m very weak and ill;

from his shining throne on high,
comes to watch me where I lie. *Refrain*

4 Jesus loves me! he will stay
close beside me all the way;
when at last I come to die,
he will take me home on high. *Refrain*

***OFFERTORY HYMN**

“We Give Thee but Thine Own”

ELW 686

*Text: We give thee but thine own, what-e'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee*

***LORD'S PRAYER, p. 145**

**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.**

***BLESSING**

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor + and give you peace.

C **Sung: Three-fold Amen**

***SENDING HYMN**

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

ELW 547

1 Sent forth by God's blessing,
our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended.
Oh, now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.

The seed of Christ's teaching,
receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
Your grace shall incite us,
your love shall unite us
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

2 With praise and thanksgiving
 to God ever-living,
 the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—
our faith ever sharing,
in love ever caring,
embracing God's children, the whole human race.
With your feast you feed us,
with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living
with praise and thanksgiving
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

***DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Share the good news.

C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

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