

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 9

July 5, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE "May God Bestow on Us His Grace" -setting by J. Wayne Kerr

Words for meditation: LSB 824

1. May God bestow on us His grace,
 With blessings rich provide us;
And may the brightness of His face
 To life eternal guide us,
That we His saving health may know,
 His gracious will and pleasure,
And also to the nations show
 Christ's riches without measure
And unto God convert them.
2. Thine over all shall be the praise
 And thanks of ev'ry nation;
And all the world with joy shall raise
 The voice of exultation.
For Thou shalt judge the earth, O Lord,
 Nor suffer sin to flourish;
Thy people's pasture is Thy Word
 Their souls to feed and nourish,
In righteous paths to keep them.
3. O let the people praise Thy worth,
 In all good works increasing;
The land shall plenteous fruit bring forth,
 Thy Word is rich in blessing.
May God the Father, God the Son,
 And God the Spirit bless us!
Let all the world praise Him alone,
 Let solemn awe possess us.
Now let our hearts say, "Amen!"
Text: Public domain

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

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

People: Amen.

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,

People: who made heaven and earth.

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

People: But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God's Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

People: Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.

Pastor: Almighty God, merciful Father, in Holy Baptism You declared us to be Your children and gathered us into Your one, holy Church, in which You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, Your mercy attends us all our days. Be our strength and support amid the wearisome changes of this world, and at life's end grant us Your promised rest and the full joys of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Zechariah 9:9–12*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 7:14–25a*

We know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 11:25–30*

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

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.

SERMON “Rest in the Ruins” Matthew 11:28-30

- I. A Tiring Time
 - What type of weariness can we experience?
 - As humans, we are comprised of body, mind, and _____.
- II. The Invitation: “Come to Me” (Matt 11:28a)
 - Luther says, “Let there be no one who fears or trembles to come; let him come, joyful and without care. I shall not push him away; I shall not drive him back; I shall cast him down; I shall not heap anguish upon anguish.”
 - _____ Is a word that does what it says. It both draws and gives the power to come.
- III. The Invited: “All who labor and are heavy laden” (Matt 11:28b)
 - What does the phrase refer?
- IV. The Inviter says, “I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28c-30)
 - Rest is given to _____ us.
 - Psalm 23 “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul...”
 - Rest helps us to look at _____ abundance.
 - 2 Corinthians 1 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”
 - Rest helps us to see that we are _____ on God.
 - “You’re Stronger”

I want you to think of a time in your life when you were exhausted. That moment when the tank was empty, you were depleted, and you had nothing left to give. Think of that time. Think of the most tiring day, or season, in your entire life. Recall the feelings and emotions. For me, the moment that comes to my mind is shortly after Mia’s birth. It was that few week period where infants are to eat and be changed roughly every three hours, and Mia was having trouble breastfeeding. Dawn was still recovering from her C-section, we were still in that new parent stage, and still figuring out Mia’s cues and schedules. I think we all were up every three hours those first few weeks. I remember at some points being so exhausted that even after drinking a cup of coffee that I could still instantly fall asleep. I feel tired just talking about it. We know what it is like to be tired, depleted, and running on empty.

We certainly know physical tiredness: it could be those first few weeks with an infant, how your body feels after working in the hot sun, or the feeling you get after a grueling workout. We can also know mental tiredness, as well. Ever have those times where at the end of the day that it seems your brain doesn’t work? You can think, but it just doesn’t compute. You can read a book or article, and then immediately afterwards say, “What did I just read? I don’t remember a thing!” We can even know emotional fatigue. Ever been drained to the point where you feel numb or have nothing to emotionally give? We might feel that way after a funeral or traumatic event.

There is another tiredness, another weariness, that Scripture clues us in on and that the world utterly misses. As humans, we are comprised of body, mind, AND soul, as a verse like Deuteronomy 6:5 points out. It says, “**You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.**” We can have a spiritual tiredness as well. Today, we’ll talk about rest, weariness, and hear what Jesus says to the weary: “**Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**”

Let's start with the invitation. Jesus gives the invite. He says, "**Come to Me!**" Luther expands on what Jesus says here in his commentary on Matthew. It is as if Jesus is saying, "Let there be no one who fears or trembles to come; let him come, joyful and without care. I shall not push him away; I shall not drive him back; I shall not cast him down; I shall not heap anguish upon anguish." In other words, "What are you waiting for? Come!" Come as you are.

As one famous Lenten Hymn puts it: "Come in poverty and meanness/come defiled, without, within/from infection and uncleanness/from the leprosy of sin/....Come, in sorrow and contrition/wounded, impotent, and blind" Jesus says, "Come! Come as you are!" and He means it! Come with your sin. Come with your burdens, heavy hearts, fears, failures, and inadequacies! He won't turn you away, nor will He send you in the other direction.

So, "Come!" It is a word that does what it says. It both draws and gives the power to come. It draws and moves us to Christ, and at the same time holds out to us all that Jesus has and gives. Jesus gives the invitation: "Come to Me!"

Let's now move from the invitation to the invited. Who is invited? "**All who labor and are heavy laden.**" All are invited. No one is left out! Those who labor and are heavy laden are especially invited to come. But, who is that? What does that mean and refer to? The phrase is a metaphor for the difficulties and pressures of life. Last week, we talked all about those. In our lives, we can endure social ruins, physical ruins, emotional ruins, and financial ruin. We can endure anxiety, apprehension, and angst from these things. Our heart can race and flutter. Our stomach can gnaw and nip at us. Our minds can wonder and spiral with questions of "What if, what if." We know this labor and these burdens.

But there is a spiritual dimension to this as well. It is not strictly physical or earthly weariness that Jesus talks about here. The phrase is also a metaphor for the demands of God's Law, and the effects it can have on our consciences. In Matthew 23:4, the same terms are used in regards to the Law's demands. When giving His woes to the Scribes and Pharisees, Jesus says, "**They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.**" Jesus calls them out for adding to God's commands, making them harder than they already are, and then doing nothing to help!

As Christians, we try to live as best as we can to God's Word and His Ten Commandments, but it is tough, taxing, and tiring. Satan is great at reminding us of our failures, and putting "salt in the wound," so to say. He says, "Oh, there you go worrying again, breaking the First Commandment. You do that a lot, don't you? You don't really trust." Or, maybe, "You are one angry person; are you really a Christian?" Our conscience doesn't help either, as it keeps track of our sin, making us feel inadequate, as a failure, for struggling with this on a daily basis! Our sinful flesh doesn't help, either. In our Epistle, Paul talks about the plight and struggle of the baptized. He says, "**So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?**" Can't you relate to this? When we want to good, evil seems close at hand. Our consciences and hearts can be heavy and burdened. We are heavy laden by the things of this world and life, and by the daily walk of our faith. We need rest! And what does the Inviter say?

The Inviter says, "**I will give you rest.**" We need rest. God knows that. Was that not the point behind the Old Testament's Sabbath Day? The Sabbath Day was to give people both physical and spiritual rest. It was a day where they stopped their work and given a chance to worship and hear God's Word. Our Lord gives us rest, and there is a purpose to it.

Rest is given to restore us. Psalm 23 helps us to see that. There, David says, "**The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me besides still waters. He restores my soul....**" In our lives, we get weighed down spiritually. We get burdened and pulled down by our sin. We bear the stresses and worries of providing for ourselves and our families. We know the anxieties and challenges that come with living in the world. But, Jesus gives rest. Jesus restores, and He restores our souls.

We are restored daily through our baptism, where the new man arises each day, restored and renewed by baptismal grace. In the Supper, we are strengthened, and depart His table and head back out into the world with peace and joy. In His Word, our faith is nourished and fed. Our Savior strengthens us for the tasks, trials, and

temptations at hand. He silences our troubled minds, and soothes our anxious hearts. He restores our souls. Rest is given to restore us. Rest also helps us to look to His abundance.

Rest helps us to look at God's abundance rather than our own. Rest turns us from ourselves and directs us to Christ. It helps us to see what we have in Christ and because of Christ. For our God is the God of all mercy and comfort. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1: **"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."** God is the God of grace, peace, strength, joy, and all good gifts. He is the God of goodness and love. As we focused on last week: **"He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!"** We get and receive all these things in Jesus and because of Jesus.

Rest also helps us to remember that we are dependent on God. We really are utterly dependent on God for everything in this life. He is the One Who gives us our jobs, home, money, food, entertainment, friends, you name it! He is the One Who brings us to faith, and gives us eternal life and salvation. We contribute nothing! This last week, I saw an example that demonstrates this well.

Mia was playing in her sand box after one of the heavy rain storms that we had this last week. The cover to the sand box didn't do a great job in keeping the water out, so most of the sand was wet, cold, and extra heavy. That didn't bother Mia at first. She scooped the sand into her bucket, and once it got full and at the top, she tried to pick it up, but she couldn't. She pulled and pulled and pulled, and it didn't go up an inch. Frustrated, she looks and says to me, "Help me. You're stronger." Not able to ignore that cute call, I came over, and with one hand, easily lifted the bucket with her. "You're stronger." Doesn't that depict our life in Christ?

Jesus says, **"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."** That yoke is easy and that burden is light precisely because He is stronger. He does all the lifting and carrying, and He calls us to come alongside Him as He carries it for us. Jesus takes our sin upon Him, giving us His righteousness and life. Jesus maintains our lives physically with the health, food, family, friends, and home He gives. Jesus maintains our faith lives, bringing us to faith, keeping us in the faith, and strengthening us in the faith. Our faith life is all Him! Jesus provides for us and gives us the rest that we need: the forgiveness of sins which gives rest and peace of mind, body, and soul. All of this, though, then points to the final rest we will have with Him in the new Heaven and new Earth.

Jesus gives the invitation: "Come to Me!" He invites all, especially those who labor and are heavy laden, and He gives rest, true rest. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION (*The offering will be collected at the back of the church.*)

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" -Pritchard, Wetzler

Words for meditation: LSB 700

Love divine, all loves excelling,

Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!

Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,

All Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,

Pure, unbounded love Thou art;

Visit us with Thy salvation,

Enter ev'ry trembling heart. Text: Public domain

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, for the countless blessings You so freely bestow on us and all creation. Above all, we give thanks for Your boundless love shown to us when You sent Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, into our flesh and laid on Him our sin, giving Him into death that we might not die eternally. Because He is now risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity, all who believe in Him will overcome sin and death and will rise again to new life. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS

People: Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth adored;

Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.

Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;

Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Your righteous judgment You condemned the sin of Adam and Eve, who ate the forbidden fruit, and You justly barred them and all their children from the tree of life. Yet, in Your great mercy, You promised salvation by a second Adam, Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and made His cross a life-giving tree for all who trust in Him.

We give You thanks for the redemption You have prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may faithfully eat and drink of the fruits of His cross and receive the blessings of forgiveness, life, and salvation that come to us in His body and blood.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

DISTRIBUTION

You are invited to receive the Lord's Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

Music during Distribution: "Shelter Me" -Michael Jonas (©2020. Used by permission.)

Composer's Note: These are difficult times for all of us, individually and globally. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted life as normal and called for acts of corporate and individual heroism in the face of present suffering and an uncertain future. People of faith may be struggling to articulate their belief in an all-good and all-powerful God in this new era. "Shelter Me" is my attempt as a church composer to find God's presence even in these fraught times. Based on the beloved Psalm 23, my paraphrase adapts the psalmist's sentiments to respond to our present anxieties:

1. Shepherd and sheep, my God and I:

to fresh green fields you led my steps in days gone by. You gave me rest by quiet springs and filled my soul with peace your loving presence brings.

Refrain: O shelter me, O shelter me: The way ahead is dark and difficult to see.

O shelter me, O shelter me: All will be well if only you will shelter me.

2. Yet now I tread a different way;

Death dogs my path with stealthy steps from day to day. I cannot find your peaceful place
But dwell in dreary darkness, longing for your face. Refrain

3. I will look back in days to come

And realize your faithfulness has led me home. Within your house I'll find my peace,
Trusting that in your mercy you have sheltered me. Refrain

POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

POSTLUDE "Entrust Your Days and Burdens" sts. 1-4 *LSB* 754

- 1 Entrust your days and burdens
 To God's most loving hand;
He cares for you while ruling
 The sky, the sea, the land.
For He who guides the tempests
 Along their thund'rous ways
Will find for you a pathway
 And guide you all your days.
- 2 Rely on God your Savior
 And find your life secure.
Make His work your foundation
 That your work may endure.
No anxious thought, no worry,
 No self-tormenting care
Can win your Father's favor;
 His heart is moved by prayer.
- 3 Take heart, have hope, my spirit,
 And do not be dismayed;
God helps in ev'ry trial
 And makes you unafraid.
Await His time with patience
 Through darkest hours of night
Until the sun you hoped for
 Delights your eager sight.
- 4 Leave all to His direction;
 His wisdom rules for you
In ways to rouse your wonder
 At all His love can do.
Soon He, His promise keeping,
 With wonder-working pow'rs
Will banish from your spirit
 What gave you troubled hours.

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