

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 15

August 16, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “When in the Hour of Deepest Need” (*LSB* 615) -J.S. Bach
“All for Christ I Have Forsaken” (*LSB* 753) -Tom Birchwood

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 in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Almighty and most merciful God, preserve us from all harm and danger that we, being ready in both body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish what You want done; 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 *Isaiah 56:1, 6–8*

Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. . . . “And the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to him, to love the name of the Lord, and to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it, and holds fast my covenant— these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.” The Lord God, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, declares, “I will gather yet others to him besides those already gathered.”

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 11:1–2a, 13–15, 28–32*

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! For I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. . . . Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them. For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the dead? . . . As regards the gospel, they are enemies of

God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience, so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy. For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 15:21–28*

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.” But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, “Send her away, for she is crying out after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

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 “Lord, Have Mercy” Matthew 15:21-28

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

When we look at our Gospel reading for today, we find something rather shocking. A woman comes to Jesus as soon as He arrives in her region, and she begs him to heal her child. Her daughter is oppressed by a demon. That doesn’t shock us. Many people come to Jesus seeking healing for themselves or someone else. What’s shocking is Jesus’ response.

Jesus barely notices the woman. He walks by her and does “not answer her a word.”¹ Jesus seems to be ignoring this woman. This doesn’t stop her though. She keeps after Jesus, begging Him to heal her daughter. If Jesus is able to ignore her, the disciples certainly are not. Just like an annoying child who keeps asking for the same thing again and again, this woman is seriously getting on the disciples’ nerves. Finally, they can’t take it anymore. “Jesus, make her go away!” they say.

The response of Jesus is even **more** shocking for us than His ignoring her. We’ve come to expect Jesus to show compassion on people in need. Whether it is the man with leprosy Jesus healed, the two men from whom Jesus cast out demons, or the crowds of people He miraculously fed; we’ve come to expect that when Jesus sees a need, He shows compassion meets it.

¹ Matt. 15:23 (ESV).

This woman, however, is different. First, Jesus ignores her. Then, Jesus tells her that He hasn't come for "her kind." Then, Jesus outright insults her, calling her a dog because she is not Jewish.

This woman, though, is completely undeterred. She seizes upon just the smallest hole in Jesus' argument, and then pries it wide open. "You may think I am a dog and not a child of God," she says to Jesus, "but even the dogs (or, in Greek, the "cute little puppies") get to eat the little crumbs of bread that fall from the children's table."² The persistence of the woman's faith moves Jesus to compassion, and He commends the woman for her great faith and heals her daughter.

Today we may be surprised by the behavior of Jesus who seems to be uncaring and dismissive towards this woman who needs His help. What would have stunned the disciples, the Jewish religious leaders, and even the Jewish Christians of the first century for whom Matthew wrote his Gospel, is that Jesus actually **does** listen to this woman, grants her request, and heals her daughter.

This woman is a Gentile, not a Jew, and Jesus—as the Jewish Messiah—has come to serve the "lost sheep of the house of Israel."³ She is not one of God's chosen people. She does not follow the Law of Moses. She has not inherited God's promises to His people. She doesn't even worship the God of Israel. But it gets worse.

Matthew tells us that this woman is a **Canaanite**. That means that she is a descendent of the wicked, idol-worshipping, human-sacrificing people who fought against the children of Israel. Matthew hints at something even worse though.

Matthew says that this episode took place in the "district of Tyre and Sidon."⁴

For any Jew who knew their Old Testament, a woman from Tyre and Sidon could bring to mind only one person: **Jezebel!**

Jezebel! The woman who was married to Ahab, the worst and wickedest king that ever sat on the throne of Israel. Together with Ahab, Jezebel turned the people of Israel from worshipping the One True God to worshipping Baal, a fierce and evil Canaanite deity who demanded human sacrifice and ritual prostitution.

Jezebel! The woman who persecuted Elijah and who did everything she could to silence the Word of God!

All of this would have been in the minds of the disciples, the Jewish religious leaders, and the early Jewish Christians hearing this through Matthew.

This woman was not some neutral Gentile who just hadn't heard about God's law and promises. She **was an enemy!** She descended from a long line of idolaters and persecutors of those who worshipped the God of Israel. It would be entirely natural that the disciples and Jesus reject her and her need.

But Jesus **doesn't really** reject her.

After stating what every faithful Jew would recognize as "the obvious," Jesus turns around and blesses this woman. Jesus commends her faith and grants her request. He says, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And, Matthew tells us, "her daughter was healed instantly."⁵

Jesus listens to this woman, commends her, and heals her daughter not because of her ethnic pedigree or anything she has done right. She hasn't followed the law. She wasn't born into the right family or nation. She has nothing to commend her whatsoever to Jesus. In fact, she is the exact opposite of what a good, God-fearing, law-obeying Jew should be. She's an enemy!

There is only one thing and one thing alone that this woman has: **her faith.**

This Canaanite woman, whose name we don't even know, confessed faith in Jesus as "the Son of David," as the Messiah of a people to whom she doesn't belong. This Canaanite woman, an enemy of God's people, confesses her faith in Jesus.

This woman's confession of faith comes **after** the Pharisees' **rejection** of Jesus and **before** Peter's **confession** of Jesus as the Son of God. This Canaanite woman—who probably hasn't the foggiest notion of what's in the law of Moses—recognizes Jesus for who He is when the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, have rejected Him! This woman, who is not Jewish and an enemy, confesses **Jesus for who He is** even before Jesus'

² Matt. 15:27.

³ Matt. 15:24 (ESV). C.f. Matt. 10:6.

⁴ Matt. 15:21 (ESV).

^a Matt. 15:28 (ESV).

own disciples. She had no right to do so; she hadn't earned it. Yet, she recognizes Jesus as the Messiah by calling Him the "Son of David."

But that's not all she says. She adds something else very important to her confession of faith.

She says, "**Have mercy upon me!**"

This doesn't quite come across in all of its depth in our English translation here. We read, "help me," but what she actually says to Jesus is, "**Lord, have mercy upon me.**"⁶

That stops us in our tracks: "**Lord, have mercy upon me.**"

This is not just, "Sir, please help me." This is "**Lord, have mercy upon me.**"

The Greek words here are *Kyrie Eleison*, from which we get the term "Kyrie," the petition to God to be merciful to us sinners. Usually in our liturgy, we pray this right after Confession and Absolution, and we also use it sometimes after each petition in the Prayer of the Church. It is the one of oldest parts of our Divine Service, and it comes straight out of Matthew's Gospel, straight out of the mouth of this Canaanite woman. This woman says, "Lord, have mercy!" because she has nowhere else to go. She doesn't have anything to bring to Jesus to bargain with either. She doesn't even deserve to be in His presence. She doesn't know the Old Testament law. She's a descendent of idolaters who persecuted God's prophets. She is the **absolute last person on earth** who should ask Jesus to do something for her!

She has nothing but a desperate cry for mercy to the God of Israel who has become human in this man Jesus Christ.

When she throws herself at Jesus's feet, she throws herself onto the mercy of almighty God. She has nothing to bring to Him at all. She doesn't deserve any help from Him, and yet she pleads for it anyway: "Lord, have mercy upon me."

And Jesus **has** mercy upon her!

We don't know her name, but we know her cry, "Lord, have mercy."

We know **her** cry, because it is also **our** cry.

We too have nothing to bring to Jesus. When we're honest with ourselves, we too have worshipped idols. They may not be named Baal, but we've served the false gods of money, power, privilege, and "the good life." In our moments of frustration, we've turned for support to all kinds of things instead of to the Lord who made heaven and earth. We have not loved God with our whole heart. We've even been like the disciples when we see people in need: "Jesus, they're bothering me! Make them go away!" We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We've piously passed ourselves off as "good Christians," judging others who don't measure up, all the while knowing our secret sins that condemn us before God and others.

Even so, we have the same cry: "Lord, have mercy upon us."

This is our cry, the cry of Christians, not because we are "good" but precisely because we are **not** good. We need God's mercy—and lots of it.

We too were enemies of God. We were enemies separated from God by our sin, by our rejection of Him. We may not be Canaanites, but we are part of the human race who has turned away from God. We have acted on that sinfulness too and have turned towards other things to fill our need for our Creator.

But in His mercy, God became one of us. In this man, Jesus, God became a human, born of the Virgin Mary, died in our place on a cross with our name on it, and was raised to life again **for us**. The mercy of this Jesus made Him our Lord while we **were still his enemies**. As St. Paul said, **while we were still sinners**, Christ died for us!⁷

So now, we join our voices with the Canaanite woman and believers of all times and places, crying, "Lord, have mercy upon us," because we know that we have nothing else to cry.

In ourselves, we are nothing, but Jesus, our God of mercy, who died and rose for us, is everything! We cry to Him, because we have nowhere else to go!

That, brothers and sisters, is faith. Faith is the desperate trust in Jesus to have mercy upon us, because we have nowhere else to turn. Peter expressed the same thing when He said to Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we

⁶ Matt. 15:25.

⁷ Romans 5:8.

go, **You** have the words of eternal life!”⁸

Jesus is the only one to whom we can go. He **is** merciful. He has **promised** to have mercy upon us, and so as His people we join our voices with the Canaanite woman and say, “Lord, have mercy upon us.”

And He hears and has **promised** to answer us!

Whatever it is today that drives you to Jesus, go to Him in the full confidence of faith in His mercy. We can exclaim: “Lord, have mercy,” because we know He will!

If it is cancer that seems to go on and on, cry to Him: “Lord, have mercy!”

If it is a child who has wandered from Christ and His Church, cry to Him: “Lord, have mercy!”

If it is the anxiety and despair that seem to grow and grow everyday this pandemic drags on, cry to Him: “Lord, have mercy!”

If it is the bleak economic outlook or the breaking down of civil society in our nation that troubles you, cry to Him: “Lord, have mercy!”

If it is the nearness of death, or the loss of one so close to you that you don’t know how to go on, cry to Him: “Lord, have mercy!”

And Jesus **will** answer you!

He will answer you by returning for you, for me, and for every person who has ever cried out, “Lord, have mercy!” It may seem that He is ignoring us right now, but He **will** answer. He who died and rose for us will answer by returning again for us, raising us and all the dead in Christ to eternal life, and putting an end to **all** suffering and death forever! We don’t know when Jesus will return for us, but He has promised He will, and we throw ourselves on the mercy of **that** promise.

Until that day, we cry out with this great woman of faith and the whole Church.

Oh Lord, + have mercy upon us!

Thanks be to God.

(Sermon Author: Joshua C. Miller, Ph.D.)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION “God Loved the World so that He Gave” (*LSB* 571) -Paul Bouman

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!

⁸ John 6:68.

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 T 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 T 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: "Thy Body Given for Me" (LSB 619) -Paul Kretschmar

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 “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” LSB 922

1 Go, My children, with My blessing,
Never alone.

Waking, sleeping, I am with you;
You are My own.

In My love’s baptismal river
I have made you Mine forever.

Go, My children, with My blessing—
You are My own.

2 Go, My children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.

Here you learned how much I love you,
What I can cure.

Here you heard My dear Son’s story;
Here you touched Him, saw His glory.

Go, My children, sins forgiven,
At peace and pure.

3 Go, My children, fed and nourished,
Closer to Me;

Grow in love and love by serving,
Joyful and free.

Here My Spirit’s power filled you;
Here His tender comfort stilled you.

Go, My children, fed and nourished,
Joyful and free.

4 I the Lord will bless and keep you
And give you peace;

I the Lord will smile upon you
And give you peace:

I the Lord will be your Father,
Savior, Comforter, and Brother.

Go, My children; I will keep you
And give you peace.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *Matt. 15:27* – “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” These are the words of faith, for faith means receiving what God gives. And God has given us so much more than just the crumbs that fall from the table. He has given us life and salvation, body and soul, eyes and ears, possessions and income. Our stewardship starts with faith in the God who is the greatest Giver.

SEW MASKS AT HOME, HELP LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF! Kits are ready! During the months of August and September the Social Ministries and Fellowship Committees are sponsoring a mask sewing project as part of the Lutheran World Relief 75,000 More! Face Mask Challenge. The masks will be delivered with International Personal Health Kits in vulnerable communities. Kits of materials and instructions are now available in the narthex. If you don't see what you need or would like us to drop off a kit or two please contact Marilyn P or Marie G. The deadline is September 10th to have our masks done. The elastic was provided through a Thrivent Action Grant. Thank you!

DALE CONNOLLY: A “Celebration of Life” service has been planned for Dale Connolly on Saturday, August 22nd at 11:00 a.m. Outdoor, socially distanced, visitation held one hour prior to the service. Due to the coronavirus, the service will be held at Woodbury Lutheran Church, Valley Creek Campus, at 7380 Afton Rd. Pastor Kooi will be officiating the service. Private family internment following the service. Masks are required.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “A Wrong Comparison” Guest Speaker: Dr. Wallace Schulz. How do you compare to your next-door neighbor, your brother-in-law, or the person you were five years ago? Comparing ourselves against God's requirements can prompt us to turn in repentant faith to Jesus, the Savior beyond compare. It’s “Archives August.” (Luke 18:9-14)

SCHOLARSHIPS NEWS: Emmaus Lutheran Church has given a scholarship to Gedion and Olif for attending Concordia Academy. We asked them to please write why they want to keep going there. Below are their responses. We have done scholarships in the past for students at Concordia Academy.

Gedion: I continue to attend CA for a couple of reasons. I’ve built a great friend base there already, and leaving it now would be a waste of effort in my part. I’m particular lazy, so that just wouldn’t work out. I’ve also met some great teachers there that go beyond just lecturing us on lessons. They had our projects that make us think and go out into the world. And finally, they have classes that some high schools just don’t offer. Those are the reasons that I attend CA.

Olif: The reason why I would like to go to Concordia Academy is that it has an incredible and welcoming atmosphere. It has a Christian based learning point and is just an overall great school. A couple of things I have learned so far at Concordia is that God is all around us watching and taking care of us at all times. He’s there every second of your life. And my faith in God has just grown over the past year at Concordia. It is just a great school in general and I can’t think of a better school for my brother and I to attend.