

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—PROPER 19

September 13, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.

PRELUDE “Lord of Glory, You Have Brought Us” *LSB* 851

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: O God, our refuge and strength, the author of all godliness, hear the devout prayers of Your Church, especially in times of persecution, and grant that what we ask in faith we may obtain; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING *Genesis 50:15–21*

When 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.” So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died, ‘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. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As 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. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 14:1–12*

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let 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. Who 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. One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The 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. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. 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. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. 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; for it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 18:21–35*

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

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

Peter came up and said to [Jesus], "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 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. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. 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.' So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. 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. Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. 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.

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 "I've been forgiven much" Matthew 18:21-35

- I. "I've been forgiven much. How could I not do the same?"
- II. The servant's debt and response (v.23-34)
 - One talent = 5,000-6,000 denarii
 - One denarius is a _____'s wages.
 - Is this debt payable?

- How much of the debt is forgiven?
 - How much is the forgiven servant owed?
 - This man's debt is _____ , _____ times less!
- III. Your debt and response (v.35)
- What is our starting point? Why?
 - "Emotions may cloud the mind and heart, but they cannot trump the promises of God."-Jeffery Gibbs

Every time that I hear this parable, I am reminded of this event that happened some time ago in the fall of 2004. As many of you know, and as I have mentioned before, my sister Kaitlin had Leukemia during my teenage years. One day, when my Grandma Brown was collecting the coin buckets that we had around town for my sister, she met a lady who was looking for her cat. As they were talking, the lady learned about my sister and my family, and wanted to do a fundraiser for us, and she did. She called all the businesses around town and got them to donate gift-certificates, services, and products for the silent auction. She got the venue it was hosted at for free, and got Ed's Rentals to donate a large tent and party games for the event. It was really well done. The community responded very generously, and people did, too.

Many people bided on the silent auction items above and beyond what things were worth, and the young man who won the 50/50 raffle donated his half back to my family, which was over \$500. These funds would be a great blessing to Kaitlin's health expenses (her last hospital stay cost over \$500,000!). Any bit helped, and did.

Sometime later, the lady who organized the event reached back out to us and told us that the event raised around \$500. Five-hundred dollars? That seemed way too low. The raffle was at least \$1,000! At this point, the red flags were starting to go up. My Mom was surprised, and rightfully so. Being curious, she said, "Wasn't everything donated?" The lady didn't take that well, and responded quite hostile with some choice words. She claimed nothing was donated, that the venue charged her, and that Ed's Rentals donated nothing. Nothing was free. She said that she had to reimburse herself. We didn't believe her given what we previously knew. To confirm the worst, my Mom called the rental company to ask what we owed for the event, and they said, "Nothing; it is on us. We hope she gets better." At that point, it became quite clear what happened. I remember feeling angry and upset at that. I can only imagine what my parents felt! I asked my Dad, "Well, what are we going to do about this? This isn't right!" And he said, "Nothing. We'll let it go." "Nothing?" I responded. "Why? What do you mean? Let it go?" And I never forgot what he said next. He said, "Yeah, let it go. I have been forgiven much. How could I not do the same?" "I have been forgiven much. How could I not do the same?" Is that not the point and summary of Jesus' parable?

The servant owes his master an insane debt. I'm not even sure that the word "insane" describes it. The servant owes his master 10,000 talents. How much is a talent? One talent is worth 5,000 denarii on the low end. How much is a denarii? A denarius is a day's wages. In total, then, he owes his master 50,000,000 million denarii, or 50,000,000 days of labor! That would be 136,000 years of working seven days a week to pay it off. To put it in perspective even more, Herod Archelaus would draw in an annual revenue of 600 talents from Judea and Samaria. The man owes roughly 20 times the revenue of an entire region! He owes 10,000 talents!

To recoup some of that gigantic loss, the master orders that the servant, his wife, children, and all that he has to be sold to help pay the bill. But just as insane as the servant's debt is, his response is equally as insane! **"So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'"** Is he delusional? There is no way he could pay that back, EVER! He couldn't even pay it back over the course of many lifetimes! Even his family working to help wouldn't put a dent in it.

But the King's response can be seen just as crazy. People today aren't too generous or gracious when you owe them money. If you miss a few mortgage payments, the bank isn't too understanding, and you will soon have a new place of residence. Miss a few car payments, and the vehicle will end up back on the lot. Don't pay your student loans, the collection company will soon be knocking. Aren't able to pay the master 10,000 talents? What does he do? He...forgives it, entirely. The master is moved by pity for the man's plight, and forgives him *everything*. He doesn't demand a dime. He doesn't require partial payments, or a payment

plan. He cancels the entire thing. What an act of mercy and grace. It would be an understatement to say that the man had been forgiven much. With a new lease on life, what will this man do next?

Well, the man leaves the master's hall and goes to *find* a fellow servant who *owes him* money. What will he do? He has been forgiven much; how could he not do the same? Once he finds the man, he seizes him, chokes him, and says **"Pay what you owe!"** Pay what you owe? What does he owe? He owes the forgiven servant 100 denarii, which is roughly three to four months of salary. Certainly not a big debt, but considering what he was forgiven, it is 600,000 times less. What does the man in debt do? He too, falls on his knees, and pleads. He even says the same thing as the servant, **"Have patience with me, and I will pay you."** Perhaps this replaying of events might strike a chord in the forgiven servant's heart, or remind him of how he was in the same situation. He had been forgiven much; could he really not do the same? Sadly, yes. He refuses to show mercy and orders him to be thrown into prison until the debt is paid in full. The other servants are rightly scandalized by this, and they go tell the master.

Hearing this, the master summons his servant, and says, **"You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?"** In other words, "You have been forgiven much; how could you not do the same?" The master orders him to be thrown into jail, and tortured until the debt is paid, which will be a long, *long*, time.

With Jesus' concluding words, He draws *us* into the parable. Ready for it? He says, **"So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."** What do we do with this? How do we understand it? How do we see ourselves in the parable, and make sense of His words? Remember the point and summary of the parable: "I've been forgiven much." That is our starting point. It is grace!

We are forgiven not because we forgive others. If that was the case, that wouldn't be grace, would it? That would be a work, right? It would make forgiveness *conditional*; if you do this, then God will do that. We are forgiven solely and only because of Jesus' death and resurrection in our place. For one sin is a debt too much to God. One sin is simply unpayable. One sin is damnable. But, we don't just have one sin, though, we have many! When we look at our lives, our debt begins to look like and *is* the 10,000 talents owed! It is simply unpayable!

But, like the master, God is moved to mercy. He pays our "debt" and forgives our sin. How? Paul explains it this way in Colossians 2: **"And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This He set aside, nailing it to the cross."** The cross of Jesus takes care of it all! Isaiah reassures us with these words in chapter 43: **"I, I am He Who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."** Forgiven! Forgotten! The Psalmist puts it another way when he says, **"as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us."** Get it? Gone! John, who heard this parable in person, writes in his epistle, **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** The prophet Micah captures the shock of it all by saying, **"Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love."** Who is this God? He is your God. He abundantly pours out this forgiveness on us abundantly through His Word, in our baptism, and in His Supper. Safe to say, "We have been forgiven much!" We are to see ourselves in grace.

As people grounded and rooted in God's grace, He calls us to extend it others. "How could we not do the same?" But that can be hard, right? Perhaps the three hardest words to say in the English language are "I forgive you." Forgiving can be tough, and painful. There can be real hurts; the wounds can still be there. One hundred denarii is a lot! Even when we forgive, we can still feel the pain and the hurt. We can still feel those emotions of anger, disappointment, sadness, and shock. What do we make of these things? What does it mean?

One seminary professor puts it well when he says, "forgiveness can readily be seen as a Spirit-led choice, an act of the regenerated will of a disciple, and the emotions may (however slowly) follow along in agreement, or they may need to be dragged kicking and screaming into the new situation....The disciple may very well have chosen to release the other person from the debt; the emotions, however, can take a lot longer to get on board with that choice. Nevertheless...disciples should not doubt the *fact* of God's unlimited forgiveness for themselves in Jesus Christ, nor should they doubt the efficacy of the past act of declaring the other person

forgiven. Emotions may cloud the mind and heart, but they cannot trump the promises of God.” Well said, right?

Just because we still might feel angry, sad, or upset by what happened, it doesn’t mean we didn’t forgive the other person; it doesn’t mean that God hasn’t forgiven us. When we still hurt from the old wounds, when the pain still doesn’t go away, or when we struggle to forgive, we stay in that grace that shapes and forms our hearts, lives, and minds. We stay in that grace that is the foundation of our relationship with Jesus. We stay in that grace that soothes and strengthens, comforts and calms, forgives and frees. What a grace we have been given in Jesus Christ to rest in and give. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

MUSIC DURING PREPARATION “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty”

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 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.

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 "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven" LSB 793

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;

To His feet your tribute bring;

Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,

Evermore His praises sing:

Alleluia, alleluia!

Praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise Him for His grace and favor
To His people in distress;
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in His faithfulness.

3 Fatherlike He tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hand He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet His mercy flows.

4 Angels, help us to adore Him;
You behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
All who dwell in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.
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Acknowledgments

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: *Romans 14:7 – “For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.”* We just don’t belong to ourselves. We belong first of all to God, and, through Him, we belong to our neighbors. We are here to serve God in our service to one another. God has called you to this service through your vocation. As a Christian, you serve others in the church; as a neighbor, you serve others in society; and as a son or daughter, husband or wife, father or mother, you serve your family.

CHALK-THE-WALK: On September 26 Emmaus will be chalking all of the sidewalk surrounding the building from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. We hope to fill it with drawings, inspiring messages, and Bible Verses, while enjoying each other’s company while social distancing. Each family and participant will receive their own sidewalk chalk box to use and keep from the event. ALL are welcome, and so are ALL ages. Don’t feel like “chalking,” just come and do some “talking” with those that are there. Don’t feel comfortable with the potential COVID-19 risk, or not able to come, but want to? Please let us know, and we can save you some squares and your own chalk kit to come and use at any time that is convenient for you. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask Pastor Kooi or Dawn. We hope to see you there!

THANK YOU to those who have sewn face masks for Lutheran World Relief. The masks will be taken to the LWF warehouse by September 15th so masks that you have made should be dropped off at Emmaus by September 13th. The kits for mask making will be available at Emmaus on an ongoing basis for future sewing. Thank you for your time and efforts for this project.

MISSING YOUR FRIENDS? Come join us Thursday evenings in the parking lot and reconnect with Emmaus members face to face. Bring a lawn chair, yourself, a beverage and reconnect. The gathering will start at **6:30 pm** but you are welcome to come when you are able. This event will happen through the month of September.

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “I Stand at the Door” Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Zeigler. Jesus is the Guest who will become the Host for all who trust in Him. New Series “Households of Faith” (Luke 24:13-35)