

## Home Worship September 27<sup>th</sup>    Seventeenth    Sunday after Pentecost

Announcements    St. Mark's continues outdoor worship through October 25<sup>th</sup> weather permitting. We will now begin worship at 10:30am going forward. Please dress accordingly with chair and mask. We continue Food Pantry donations and Neighbors in Need. Today is the final week for CROP walk donations.

### Confession and Forgiveness.

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

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. *Silence is kept for reflection.*

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Forgiveness 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. Amen.

### Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### Psalm 25:1-9

<sup>1</sup>To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

<sup>2</sup>My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

<sup>3</sup>Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

<sup>4</sup>Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.

<sup>5</sup>Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

<sup>6</sup>Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

<sup>7</sup>Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

<sup>8</sup>You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.

<sup>9</sup>You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

## **The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 21:23-32 Glory to you O Lord**

*After driving the moneychangers out of the temple (21:12), Jesus begins teaching there. His authority is questioned by the religious leaders, who are supposed to be in charge of the temple.*

<sup>23</sup>When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” <sup>24</sup>Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. <sup>25</sup>Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ <sup>26</sup>But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” <sup>27</sup>So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. <sup>28</sup>“What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup>He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup>The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. <sup>31</sup>Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. <sup>32</sup>For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.”

The word of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ**

### Sermon

The story of Jesus’ encounter with the most powerful leaders in Jerusalem follows his triumphal entry on the donkey and his cleansing and occupation of the temple. As the second day of Jesus’ occupation begins, the various groups oppose Jesus five more times, all meant to damage his authority. These stories are all contests where the winner gains honor and power at the loser’s expense. If Jesus were to lose any of these challenges, he would be removed from the temple as a teacher, his issues with the authorities in Jerusalem would end, and the leaders would regain control of the temple. If the religious leaders win any of these challenges, there is no need to crucify him.

In this first, long challenge, Jesus’ adversaries are chief priests and elders of the people. There was already suspicion about the legitimacy and authority of the priestly leaders in Jerusalem, who ruled in favor of Roman politicians. The elders, were wealthy elites and the chief priests, controlled large parcels of land in Judea and beyond, making them nearly equal with the rich, powerful landowners who are often targets of Jesus’ parables.

“Who gave you this authority?” the leaders ask. Jesus currently occupies the temple, he has the upper hand, and can set the conditions for his reply. Before he will answer them, he asks them about John’s baptism: “Was it from heaven or merely human?” This question puts them in a bind. They know that if they deny John’s baptism the crowds will be upset and they need their support. If they say that John’s baptism came from heaven, he will ask them why they did not

believe it. They answer, probably mumbling, “we don’t know”. They have lost. This kind of debate sounds quite familiar in our political climate. Tell the people what they want to hear whether it is true or not. Try and guess what to say in order to retain power and control.

Jesus is not done yet with the chief priests and elders of the people. He continues to teach with the Parable of the Two Sons. A father asks his sons to go and work in the vineyard. One son says he will work in the vineyard, but he doesn’t. The other son says he won’t, but he does. Jesus asks which one does the will of the father. The authorities believe the first son did the will of his father by saying he would and but he didn’t work. They are wrong. The son who refused to work but later did work is the one who did the will of the father. Once again we witness a plot twist—whatever we expect is reversed by Jesus.

The conclusion is that “Actions speak louder than words.” The point of the story is that the religious leaders of the day give God lip service, but in the end their actions don’t match their words. The “sinners” don’t bother with lip service, but in the end they are found to learn and be changed. They are ones who listen to John the Baptist’s call to repent.

As a Christian I am often surprised by some of the people I know who say they love God will not do the work of God. Never help, volunteer...nothing. Lip service. And some of the most sinful people you could ever meet are right there to lend a hand and help the neighbor out. Actions speak louder than words.

It is our nature to look for outward signs of authority—job title, education, connections to powerful people, and so on. Jesus’ authority came from who he was, not from what he accomplished. Authority is not the same as power—authority is given; power is taken. Authority comes from the “author.” The author being God from whom the son came

This is the hope of the gospel. The sun may set on the vineyard, but it never sets on God’s grace. If we can see our need for a savior, we may ask God to guide us, and our actions may show God that we are faithful. God is our greatest authority of repentance and grace. Amen.

## **WE SHARE OUR FAITH THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES' CREED**

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. *A brief silence.* In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Most gracious God, according to your wisdom the deep waters are opened up and clouds drop gentle moisture. We praise you for the return of planting and harvest seasons, for the fertility of the soil, for the harvesting of the crops, and for all other blessings that you in your generosity pour out on all people. Give us a full understanding of your mercy, that our lives may show respect and care for your creation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit especially for the healing of Kent, Karla, and Brad For those in care facilities: Sibyl, Barb, Lois, Tammy, Trudy, Jessica, Hazel, Jeanne and Linda. We pray for those in military service: Logan, JJ, Bryan, Dustin, Brad and Travis). Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community; make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us—tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## Gathered into one by the power of the Holy Spirit we pray as Jesus taught

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

Mothering God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

## Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor.

**Thanks be to God.**