

Epiphany 7



The portion of Matthew's gospel we consider this morning gives us a glimpse of what the Christ-following community of faith should look like. We have to recall how difficult and radical these words of Jesus would have been, given to a word that spent all of its time trying to avoid one another. It would have been challenging!

Jesus comes to share with us the love of the Kingdom of God and what that means for living each and every day. We cannot begin to imagine how important it is to live within those kingdom moments, because we are often dragged off into the wrong direction.

Recall that Jesus invites us elsewhere in Scripture to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, as well as loving our neighbor as ourselves. This would suggest that we are able to begin to think about our neighbor as someone who is approachable, lovable, and even downright friendly. It becomes an entirely different environment than what we used to believe what would be normal.

Perhaps today we can move into a new understanding of living the life that Jesus invites us to consider. Perhaps today we can make a new beginning on the life that Jesus intends us to have. Perhaps today we can begin to live up to those great expectations that we can have for ourselves as we walk the walk of faith.

Will we be perfect? Of course not. If we fall 7 times, it is important that we just keep getting up again and again. It is the one extra time that we rise that matters, not necessarily the number of times that we might fall.

God has a preferred future for His people. He sent His Son Jesus to suffer, die on the cross, and be raised to become the salvation of the world. We are invited to embrace that fact and listen to what Jesus has to say. In this sermon in Matthew's gospel, we are told that we should be thinking about sharing our lives with others in the same generosity that God has blessed us with in our own lives. As we are blessed, we too can bless others.

Pastor Jonathon Kosec

OUR WORSHIP TODAY

GATHERING AND MEDITATION TIME

Pre-Service Music

Welcome and Announcements

CONFESSIONAL PRAYER

As we celebrate this Epiphany season, we are reminded of the revelation of Jesus Christ to the entire world through a variety of methods and many people. In our time and place, we forget what Christ has done for us, and at times, we lose our way and pick really terrible alternatives. Recognizing this weakness in our spirit, we pause to offer our confession this day:

Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by the things 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

ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Almighty God, in His mercy, has given His Son to die for us, and for His sake, and by His promise, forgives us all our sin. Therefore on His behalf, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Go and sin no more, that the rest of your life might be pure and holy and modeled after our Lord Jesus in all we say and all we do, we pray in His Holy Name, Amen.

HYMN 33 Great is Thy Faithfulness 1+3

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY (Unison): Holy God of compassion, you invite us into your way of forgiveness and peace. Lead us to love our enemies, and transform our words and deeds to be like his through whom we pray, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Alleluia. In those who obey the word of Christ, the love of God has reached perfection. Alleluia.

THE FIRST LESSON: Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18

New Living Translation (NLT)

The Lord also said to Moses, “Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

“When you harvest the crops of your land, do not harvest the grain along the edges of your fields, and do not pick up what the harvesters drop. It is the same with your grape crop—do not strip every last bunch of grapes from the vines, and do not pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Leave them for the poor and the foreigners living among you. I am the Lord your God.

“Do not steal. “Do not deceive or cheat one another.

“Do not bring shame on the name of your God by using it to swear falsely. I am the Lord. “Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

“Do not make your hired workers wait until the next day to receive their pay.

“Do not insult the deaf or cause the blind to stumble. You must fear your God; I am the Lord.

“Do not twist justice in legal matters by favoring the poor or being partial to the rich and powerful. Always judge people fairly.

“Do not spread slanderous gossip among your people. “Do not stand idly by when your neighbor’s life is threatened. I am the Lord.

“Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives. Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin.

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

THE SECOND LESSON :1 Corinthians 3:10-11, 16–23 New Living Translation (NLT)

Because of God’s grace to me, I have laid the foundation like an expert builder. Now others are building on it. But whoever is building on this foundation must be very careful. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one we already have —Jesus Christ.

Don't you realize that all of you together are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God lives in you? God will destroy anyone who destroys this temple. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

Stop deceiving yourselves. If you think you are wise by this world's standards, you need to become a fool to be truly wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As the Scriptures say, "He traps the wise in the snare of their own cleverness."

And again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise; he knows they are worthless." So don't boast about following a particular human leader. For everything belongs to you— whether Paul or Apollos or Peter, or the world, or life and death, or the present and the future. Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 5:38-48

New Living Translation (NLT)

"You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

The Gospel of our Lord.

PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST.

SERMON "Great Expectations!"

Pastor Jonathon Kosec

SERMON HYMN: 335 In Christ there is No East or West 1,3,4

OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH: The Apostles Creed (C)

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 into hell. 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 Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE OFFERING:

After the consecration of the Offering, we will sing the Doxology:

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow, Praise him, all creatures here below, Praise him above, Ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THE PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

-PRAYERS OF PRAISE, WORDS OF INSTITUTION, LORD'S PRAYER

THE DISTRIBUTION

THE COMMUNION BLESSING

HYMN 337 God of Grace and God of Glory 1,4

THE BENEDICTION & THE DISMISSAL

P. Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

C. **Thanks be to God**

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WELCOME TO OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN! Thank you for joining us as we worship our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We are happy you are here! Please take a moment to turn your Cell Phone or other devices to mute, so they do not go off during the service and become disruptive. We appreciate your help to this regard. And thanks again for being here with us this morning!

IN OUR PRAYERS: We take time during our service to offer petitions for the prayer needs of ourselves, our families, our friends, and the world. Please give those requests to Pastor at the beginning portion of the service so they can be included in our prayers during worship today.

OUR BIBLE STUDY ON ROMANS will next be held on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, at 10:00 AM. We'll join in our Bible Study that morning and then join together for our Ash Wednesday worship. Please take the time to join us as we dig further into the Word of God with the continuation of our study.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH! We begin a few weeks of celebrating our fifth birthday celebration with our worship this morning. We will follow up with a special dinner on February 26th after worship. In the meantime, we'll hear some announcements this morning as we get the celebration started! Please plan to be with us as we celebrate this important milestone!

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS TO BE WITH US THIS LENTEN SEASON! Traditionally a season of preparation and reflection, we hope to have a new look on the traditions of Lent as we celebrate the work that Jesus accomplished on the cross. More information will be available as we get closer to Ash Wednesday, March 1, when we begin together with a special service here at the Church. It might be the best time to bring someone with you and form a new church relationship together!

A WORD OF THANKS from Tony & Priscilla Alonzo for the cards, plants, concerns and prayers over the last few days at the death of Priscilla's mom. They give God the glory and ask that you keep them in your prayers as in the days and weeks ahead they will be consolidating households and have her dad move in with them.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION: Our Savior Lutheran Church will be celebrating its 5th Anniversary next Sunday, February 26th with a pot luck lunch after the service.

The Church will provide the main meat dish and a cake. A sign up sheet will be inside the front door this Sunday and everybody is welcome. **Bring a dish to share and join us!**

Our Savior Lutheran Church, LCMC

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Office: (941) 249-5108

Worship Time: Sunday 10 A.M.

Bible Study: Times as announced

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