

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost



October 4 2020
10:30AM

We Gather

Instructions for standing, sitting, and kneeling are rubrics from the Book of Common Prayer. Any person who is unable to stand or kneel is welcome to sit for any part of the service regardless of the printed instruction. Please feel comfortable using any posture you wish.

Processional Hymn: #518 **Christ is made the sure foundation** *Please stand as you are able.*

Opening Acclamation / Call to Worship *Please stand as you are able.*

Deacon: Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

People: **And blessed be His kingdom, now and for ever. Amen**

Collect for Purity

Deacon: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Song of Praise: #S-236 **Glory to You** *Please remain standing.*

Collect of the day *Please be seated.*

Deacon: Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray, and to give more than we either desire or deserve: Pour upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things for which we are not worthy to ask, except through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Savior; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen**

We Hear God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 5:1-7 *Please remain seated.*

Reader: A reading from the book of Isaiah.

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 80:7-14

Reader: Restore us, O God of hosts; *

People: **show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.**

Reader: You have brought a vine out of Egypt; *

People: **you cast out the nations and planted it.**

Reader: You prepared the ground for it; *

People: **it took root and filled the land.**

Reader: The mountains were covered by its shadow *

People: **and the towering cedar trees by its boughs.**

Reader: You stretched out its tendrils to the Sea *

People: **and its branches to the River.**

Reader: Why have you broken down its wall, *

People: **so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes?**

Reader: The wild boar of the forest has ravaged it, *

People: **and the beasts of the field have grazed upon it.**

Reader: Turn now, O God of hosts, look down from heaven; behold and tend this vine; *

People: **preserve what your right hand has planted.**

Second Lesson: Philippians 3:4b-14

Reader: A reading from the book of Philippians.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn:

Lo! What a cloud of witnesses (Vs. 1,2,3)

Please stand as you are able.

Gospel: Matthew 21:33-46

Please remain standing as you are able.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Jesus said, "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.'" So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?"

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

Reader: Alleluia! Alleluia! Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in them the fire of your love.

People: **Thanks be to God! Alleluia, Alleluia.**

Sermon: The Rev. Thomas Harrington

Please be seated.

The young minister was fresh out of seminary and had been called by a church in the great state of Kentucky to serve as its new pastor. Determined to save his flock from sin, he felt it necessary to expound on the subject. In his eyes, sin was sin and it was his job to tell it as he saw it. Well he wasted no time in jumping on the subject as he addressed his new congregation about the evils associated with the excessive use of alcohol. It surely was a spirited talk filled with ample scripture and fist thumping on the

pulpit. He poured his heart and soul into the subject for about 45 minutes. He must have been successful in delivering his message he thought, because several of the leaders of the church wanted to meet with him about what he had said. In a quiet manner they addressed their new minister by suggesting that perhaps another area of sin could be talked about in his sermons. After all, they said, many members of the church depended on the manufacture and sale of spirits for their lively hood. Surely he wouldn't want to do anything to jeopardize that.

Keeping in mind what the elders had told him the week before, he decided to talk about the evils of gambling to excess and leave the subject of alcohol alone. So, on the 2nd Sunday he addressed his congregation with the topic of gambling. Filled with the same enthusiasm as before, his talk proceeded for 45 minutes. Shortly after the service, he was again summoned by the elders. Again in a quiet manner, they suggested that he choose another topic for his sermons. After all, they said Kentucky is famous for horse racing and betting goes along with it providing income for the area residents. Surely he could come up with another sin to talk about that might not have such a negative impact on the members of his church. Taking their advice to heart on his 3rd Sunday, he felt confident and landed a real barn burner of a sermon that lasted one hour. This time he talked about tobacco. The body was indeed a temple for the Holy Spirit and in no way should it be defiled. Hoping that maybe he was successful in this sermon, he headed to the church coffee hour only to be met again by the elders. Convinced that the pastor was not getting the message, they strongly suggested that the subject of tobacco not be discussed in any sermons in the future. Kentucky after all was famous for raising tobacco and provided jobs to a large portion of the population who needed those jobs. Again he was reminded that there were many other areas of sin that he could be addressing and that is what he should do. Undaunted, Sunday #4 arrived and the minister gave another spirited sermon lasting his usual 45 minutes to an hour. Aren't you lucky mine only last 10 to 15 minutes? After the service the new pastor headed to the coffee hour only to be met again by the elders but to his surprise he quickly learned that they were very pleased with the message of his sermon and that was the sort of thing he should be talking about. In the opinion of the elders that was the best sermon they had ever heard on the perils of off shore oil drilling!

Like the young pastor in the story I just told you, today in our gospel reading from Matthew, we find we have another young preacher talking about spiritual matters only this time in the form of a parable rather than in long sermons. What can we draw from this gospel reading that will benefit us if we listen and follow? The Rev. William Barclay has done a great job in breaking down this parable which I have taken the liberty to paraphrase and to add in some of my own thoughts as well.

To begin, the parable is a story about what was going on in Israel and the relationship between the Jews and Jesus. In the parable the vineyard is the Nation of Israel. The landowner is God. The tenants are the religious leaders of Israel, the chief priests and Pharisees. They had charge over the welfare of the nation. The slaves sent to collect the produce are the prophets sent by God that were so often rejected and killed. The son who came last is none other than Jesus himself. In this parable, Jesus has stated all at once, the history and doom of Israel. But the parable also tells us something about God; it tells us some things that concern us and lastly something about Jesus.

Concerning God it says:

1. God has trust in us to do the right thing. The owner of the vineyard placed his trust in those who were to cultivate it. He did not stand over them and micro manage them with strong supervision. He went away and left them to handle their task. God is like the owner of the vineyard. He entrusts us with certain tasks and entrusts us to do them. He does not micro manage us. Anyone who has a boss that micro manages can attest to what that is like.
2. It says God is patient. God sent messenger after messenger. He did not come with sudden vengeance like you or I might when one messenger had been abused or ill treated. Instead he gave the cultivators chance after chance to respond to his appeal. The parable tells us that God will bear with us in all our sinning and that we will not be cast off.
3. It tells us about God's judgment. In the end, the master of the vineyard took the vineyard from the tenants and gave it to others. God's judgment is stern and is the sternest when he takes from us the task he meant for us to do. One perhaps can relate to this thought better if any have been assigned to do something say at your job and then it is taken away from you and given to someone else due to poor performance. A person could be considered to be at his lowest when he becomes useless to God.

Concerning us, the parable tells us this:

1. We have privilege. In the parable, the vineyard was equipped with everything, the hedge, the wine press, and the tower all of which would make the tasks of the tenants easy to do enabling them to handle the required duties well. When given a task by God, God will give us the tools and means by which to do that assignment. That is something to think about. In all that you undertake that has the blessing of God on it; have you ever come up short on the needed tools to do it? I am not saying the task was easy but have you ever failed at a task because you needed something and it couldn't be obtained? We are privileged in that we receive from God what we need in order to do his will.
2. The parable tells us that we have freedom. The master left the tenants to do the task as they liked. God is not a manage by fear task master. He is like a wise manager who allocates tasks and makes sure the person has the tools to do it. He then trusts to those whom the task is given to handle the matter as they see the need.
3. The parable tells us that in the end we will be held accountable and will answer for our actions. This means that there is a day of reckoning. We will have to answer for the way in which we have carried out the tasks that God has given us to do.
4. It tells us of the deliberateness of human sin. The tenants carried out a deliberate policy of rebellion and disobedience towards the master. Sin is deliberate opposite to God. It is the taking of our own way when we well know what the way of God should have been.

The last area that the parable tells us about is Jesus.

1. It tells us of the claim made by Jesus. Here Jesus is lifting himself out of the succession of the prophets. Those that came before him were the messengers of God and no one can deny them that honor but they were servants. Jesus states he is the son. Jesus makes one of the clearest claims and that is he is unique. He is different from even the greatest of those that came before him.
2. We learn of the sacrifice of Jesus. The parable makes it clear that Jesus knew what lay ahead for him. In the parable the hands of the wicked men killed the son. Jesus never had any doubts of what lay before him. He did not die because he was compelled to die; he willingly and fully knew that he was looking squarely at death.

The parable closes with the symbol of the stone. There are two pictures here that we can look at.

1. The first is quite clear. It is the picture of the stone which the builders rejected but became the most important stone in the whole building. The picture is from Psalm 118:22: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner". Originally the Psalmist meant this as a picture of the nation of Israel. Israel was the nation which was despised and rejected. The Jews were hated by all. They had been servants and slaves of many nations; but none the less the nation which all despised was the nation of God's chosen people. It may be that people reject Christ and refuse him and seek to eliminate him but they will find that the Christ who they reject is the most important person in the world. Julian the Roman Emperor tried to banish Christianity and to bring back pagan ways. He failed miserably and in the end was to have said that to remove Christ from the topmost niche was not for him to bring about. Even today that battle continues but to no avail. It is Christ that has become the Judge and King of the entire world.
2. The second picture of the stone is mentioned in verse 44 and is a more difficult picture. It is of a stone that breaks a person if he stumbles against it. And which crushes a person to powder if it falls on him. It is a composite picture put together from three Old Testament lessons, Isaiah 8, Isaiah 28 and Daniel 2. The idea behind this is that all these Old Testament pictures of a stone are summed up in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the foundation on which everything is built and the cornerstone which holds everything together. To refuse his way is to throw one's self against the walls of the law of God. To defy Christ is in the end to be crushed out of life. However strange these pictures of the stone may sound to us, they were very familiar to every Jew who knew the prophets.

The young pastor in his first Church in Kentucky wanted to protect and save his congregation from sin but his messages were rejected as they weren't messages of this world that they wanted to hear. Jesus came with a message but because it wasn't of this world, not only was his message rejected by some back then but they killed him on top of it. Even today the message is still being rejected. We learned today some things about God, what they mean to us and Jesus. We learned what it means if we reject what we have heard. Jesus came into the world to bring life abundant to those who will follow him. To reject him is to deny the fulfillment of that promise. Amen.

Silence for reflection after the sermon

Nicene Creed

All in unison; Please stand as you are able.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Reader: As we have offered gratitude for God's grace upon this community, let us now offer our gifts to the Lord, trusting that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be led to ever more faithful fellowship and service.

Reader: For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...

People: **St. Luke's, Bartlesville; People and clergy of the Anglican Diocese of Uruguay; Diocese of Rhode Island; The Episcopal Church of Cuba.**

Reader: For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For...

People: **Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Ed and Poulson, our Bishops; Bob and Tom, our clergy; Tim & Jennifer, our wardens; vestry delegates, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...

People: **Donald, our President; Mike, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...

People: **Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Vicki, Angie, Blair, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jean, and all those affected by the pandemic, and those whose suffering is known only to God.**

Reader: We pray for those in the armed services. We pray for those who have died (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...

People: **Anna, Audrey, Finley, Jeremy, Sophie.**

Reader: Also those who are traveling, (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: Bless all those everywhere who give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy for love of him who laid down his life for us.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

People: **To you, O Lord.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Deacon: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

All: **Most merciful God, we confess that 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. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Peace

Please stand as you are able.

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

People: **And also with you.**

Greet one another in the name of Christ.

Announcements; Anniversary and Birthday Blessings

Offertory

Offertory Sentence: Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God. *Ephesians 5:2*

Offertory Hymn:

Please remain seated.

Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Please stand as you are able.

Deacon: O gracious God...

People: **We offer you these gifts which you have given us; this bread and this wine. With them we offer ourselves, our lives, and our work, to become through your Holy Spirit a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice. Amen.**

We Share the Meal

Deacon: The Lord be with us,

People: **And also with you,**

Deacon: Let us pray.

All: **Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord, who in these holy mysteries gives us a pledge of eternal life; and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.**

Lord's Prayer:

Deacon: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

All: **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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Deacon: These are the Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*At Grace Episcopal Church **all are welcome to receive Holy Communion.** Those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come to the altar rail to receive a Blessing. Blessings are indicated by crossing your arms over your chest when the priest approaches. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words: "The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven"*

Distribution of Communion

*At Grace Episcopal Church, all are welcome to receive Holy Communion. Please tell the usher if you need the bread and wine brought to you at your seat. At the altar there are several ways to receive the bread, and wine: you may hold your palms upward, receive and consume the bread. To drink from the chalice, it is helpful if you guide the cup to your mouth. If you wish to receive the bread dipped in wine from the chalice bearer, leave the bread on the palm of your hand, and they will dip the bread for you and place it in your mouth. OR you may dip the bread into the chalice yourself, and consume it. IF you wish to receive the bread only, hold your palms upward, consume the bread, and cross your arms over your chest when the chalice bearer approaches. The Bread and the Cup are given to the communicants with these words "The Body of Christ, the bread of heaven" **[Amen]. "The Blood of Christ, the cup of salvation" [Amen].***

Those who do not wish to receive Holy Communion are invited to come to the altar rail to receive a Blessing, indicate this by crossing your arms over your chest when the priest approaches.

Communion Hymn:

Please remain seated.

We Go in Mission

Departing Words

Deacon: The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. **Amen**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon us and remain with us for ever. **Amen.**

Sending

Deacon: Alleluia! Alleluia! Let us go forth rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

People: **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Recessional Hymn: #495

Hail, thou once despised Jesus (Vs, 1,4)

Please stand as you are able.



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