

† HOME SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER †
8th Sunday after Pentecost
July 26, 2020

PRELUDE

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Franklin Ritter

INVOCATION and CONFESSION

P In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P The Sun of Righteousness shall rise with shining beams of healing. Let us gather under the wings of God's mercy.

C Gracious God, we acknowledge that we are sinners and we confess our sins – those known to us that burden our hearts and those unknown to us but seen by You. We know that before You nothing remains hidden, and in You everything is revealed. Free us from the slavery of sin; liberate us from the bondage of guilt; work in us that which is pleasing in Your sight; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for us, and for His sake forgives us all our 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.

C Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

P Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

C His mercy endures forever.

P Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy.

C For God satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.

P Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good;

C His mercy endures forever.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Let us pray:

C O God, Your ears are always open to the prayers of Your people. Open our hearts and minds to understand Your ways, that we may live according to Your will and receive the gifts of Your Spirit; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry ev'rything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; oh, what needless pain we bear –
all because we do not carry ev'rything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged – take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness – take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge – take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a solace there.

EPISTLE

Romans 8:26-39

²⁶Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. ²⁷And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. ³¹What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³²He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. ³⁵Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:31-34, 44-52

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 13th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

³¹[Jesus] put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened." ³⁴Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing... ⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN OF THE DAY

I Love to Tell the Story

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,
of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

Refrain: I love to tell the story; 'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, 'tis pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it, more wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story, for some have never heard
the message of salvation from God's own holy word. **Refrain**

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,
'twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long. **Refrain**

SERMON

Let Me Introduce You: A Parable

Rev. Dr. Robert Hartwell

THE APOSTLES' CREED

C 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.**

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P Confident of God's care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

P Merciful God, Your kingdom is revealed to us in common things: a mustard shrub, a woman baking bread, a fishing net. Help Your church witness to the surprising yet common ways You encounter us in daily life. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P When Your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. Increase our understanding and awe of Your creation; guide the work of scientists and researchers, especially those working on medical treatments for Covid-19. Treasuring the earth, may we live as grateful and healing caretakers of our home. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P As the birds of the air nest in branches of trees, gather the nations of the world into the welcoming shade of Your merciful reign. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and walk in the way of peace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Your Spirit helps us in our weakness and intercedes for the saints according to Your will. Help us when we do not know how to pray. Give comfort to the dying, refuge to the weary, justice to those who are oppressed, and healing to the sick. We pray especially for all on our prayer line and those we remember before You now (pause). Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P You show steadfast love and direct us to ask of You what we need. Help our community of faith to seek boldly what is most needed. Refresh us with new visions of how to be Your people in this place and time. We pray especially for The Chapel School and Concordia College. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P In You, eternal God, our lives are never lost. Strengthen us by the inspiring witness of Your faithful people in all times and places, and gather us into Your kingdom with all Your saints in light. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from Your love, we offer these prayers to You; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

C 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.

CLOSING HYMN

I Love Your Kingdom, Lord

I love Your kingdom, Lord, the place of Your abode,
the Church our blest Redeemer saved with His own precious blood.

I love Your church, O God, Your saints in ev'ry land,
dear as the apple of Your eye and graven on Your hand.

Sure as Your truth shall last, to Zion shall be giv'n
the brightest glories earth can yield and brighter bliss of heav'n.

BENEDICTION

P 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.

C Amen.

P Go in peace to serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

I Love Your Kingdom, Lord

Healey Willan

* * * * *

Special thanks to our additional participant in today's service:

Lector Tony DeRosa

A Parable

LET ME INTRODUCE YOU:

1. The parables are found in the _____ Gospels. The different Gospel writers (evangelists) choose different parables to tell. For instance, Luke includes two about _____ that the others do not.
2. A parable is an ancient teaching method using _____ stories with a _____ ending.
3. The modern definition of parable is _____ the same as the method used by Jesus.
4. The meaning was not usually _____. Often, they were designed to offer multiple _____.
5. The parables are not always _____ stories, nor are they _____ stories. The meaning of the parable is not the _____ itself, but the truth it teaches.
6. Jesus lived in an agrarian culture, so many of the parables are about _____ and country life.

Matthew 13:31-32 ³¹He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

Let Me Introduce You Series

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1. synoptic, prayer
2. simple, surprise
3. not
4. complex, interpretations
5. interesting, moral, story
6. farming