

## Lessons for 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – September 3, 2023

**Collect:** Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **First Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21**

O Lord, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me in my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed? Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. Therefore thus says the Lord: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the Lord. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from grasp of the ruthless.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### **Psalm 26:1-8**

Give judgment for me, O Lord, for I have lived with integrity;

*I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.*

Test me, O Lord, and try me;

*examine my heart and my mind.*

For your love is before my eyes;

*I have walked faithfully with you.*

I have not sat with the worthless,  
*nor do I consort with the deceitful.*  
I have hated the company of evildoers;  
*I will not sit down with the wicked.*  
I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord,  
*that I may go in procession round your altar;*  
Singing aloud a song of thanksgiving  
*and recounting all your wonderful deeds.*  
Lord, I love the house in which you dwell,  
*and the place where your glory abides.*

**Second Reading: Romans 12:9-21**

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayers. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

**Gospel: Matthew 16:21-28**

Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me;

for you are setting your mind, not on divine things but on human things.” Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

**Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost, September 3, 2023.**

Our lessons today are all over the place. Probably because there are different speakers with different agendas. But there is something in common, and that is that these agendas are ours as well.

Jeremiah is angry. Kind of snarky. “O Lord, remember me ..... on your account I suffer insult ..... Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.”  
**(Jeremiah 15:15)**

We feel that way sometimes, don't we? We pray for a certain outcome, and seemingly get a different outcome.

But the Lord stays with us. “If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. ....I am with you to save you and deliver you.”

We've been there also, haven't we? Maybe we're there right now. Angry with the Lord for apparently not listening to us, or worse, listening but not doing what we want.

But, we don't give up. We don't give up on ourselves and we don't give up on our Lord. That is the gist of today's Psalm **(Psalm 26:3)**. “For your love is before my eyes; I have walked faithfully with you .... Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides.”

“That's more like it” the Lord says. “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Paul writes to the Romans: “Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.” **(Romans 10:12)**

Now, we're back on track. Or, are we?

In Matthew's gospel **(Matthew 16:25)**, Jesus takes Peter aside to remind him that “those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”

“Lose their life for my sake.” Is that the price that we must pay – losing our life - to receive God’s approval? Surely we don’t have to take these words literally. We feel the love of God, and we’re still here. We’re living for Christ, not dying for Christ.

Is it okay to be alive for Christ? Well, I sure hope so. Because that’s what we’re doing right now. We’re not hanging from a cross. Death is not at our door. Or, so we hope.

But death will be at our door at some point. And we won’t always know what or when that point will be. So, what do we do? Well, we make the best of this life, day by day, including thanking the Lord for being by our side through it all.

“Thanking the Lord.” That’s our lifestyle, if you will. And it works well for us. Bumps in the road? Oh yes, including some of our own making. But also many smooth portions in the road. Blessings if you will. Often a result of the Lord picking us up and reminding us that there are better days ahead. Sin and forgiveness, with forgiveness coming out on top.

At least, that’s our faith. Imagine facing the bumps without that faith. Not a pretty sight. No, we’ll stick with the Lord, thank you very much. With the hope that we will hear these words: “Servant, well done.” **(Hymn 541, stanza 5)**

This kind of positive thinking is a choice that we make. God doesn’t force it on us. God makes lots of suggestions, and, if we listen, maybe some warnings. But God doesn’t insist on our allegiance. Yet, when our allegiance weakens, God is there to renew our spirits. God is never very far away.

That’s what the Holy Spirit is all about. The God who makes the rules not only allows for our misadventures, but provides a ramp for the real adventure, which is coming home to the Lord.

You and I do a lot of coming home to the Lord. And don’t we feel better for having done so? Even when we’re angry with the Lord, we appreciate the Lord’s presence. There is no sign on the Lord’s door that says “Don’t even bother.”

But there are some other signs that the Lord could post. Here are a few of those. “Finally.” “It’s about time.” “Where have you been?” “I suppose you want even more forgiveness.”

Oh yes, the Lord could be snarky if the Lord so chose. But, given the choice, the Lord has decided on forgiveness. “You and I are saved. Period!”

Whether we accept that decision, of course, is up to us. It doesn’t change the outcome. God has made a decision. We are saved. The next step is up to us. Which would be an enormous “THANK YOU, LORD.”

That’s the STEP, that’s the response, that’s the horse which has been offered and which you and I have decided to ride. We haven’t created the opportunity. That’s what God has done. That’s what God is doing. That’s what God will continue to do.

Given all of that, what’s not to like about the One we honor right here every time we gather.

And what response does God look for from us? A THANK YOU. That’s it. A THANK YOU.

If we take that THANK YOU step – and we’re doing so right now and every time we help a neighbor or a stranger - there’s a smile on God’s face. A smile that is stronger, greater, more powerful, more lasting than whatever “stumbling blocks” Satan can offer.

Our final hymn today is “Give praise and glory unto God.” Here are the highlights of the three stanzas. This is why we gather.

with balm my inmost heart he fills, his comfort all my anguish stills  
exult in thy creative might that doeth all things well and right  
through all his kingdom’s wide domain, his righteousness and justice rein.

No snarkiness there! Just the opposite. To which we say “Thank you, Lord.”

*Amen.*



**Service of Holy Communion**  
**Pentecost 14 – September 3, 2023**

**Hymn 8 – Morning has broken**

Morning has broken like the first morning like the first morning,  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!

Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dew fall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

Mine in the sunlight! Mine is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elations, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!

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Blessed be God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
*And blessed be his kingdom, now and for ever.*

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.

*Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.*  
*Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,*  
*we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.*  
*Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,*  
*you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;*  
*you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.*  
*For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,*  
*you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,*  
*in the glory of God the father. Amen.*



The Lord be with you.  
And also with you.  
Let us pray.

### **Collect for Pentecost 14**

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **First Reading – Jeremiah 15:15-21**

### **Psalm 26:1-8**

### **Second Reading – Romans 12:9-21**

### **Hymn 541 – Come, labor on - stanzas 1, 2 and 5**

Come, labor on. Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain,  
while all around us waves the golden grain?  
and to each servant does the Master say, "Go work today."

Come, labor on. The enemy is watching night and day,  
to sow the tares, to snatch the seed away;  
while we in sleep our duty have forgot, he slumbered not.

Come, labor on. No time for rest, till glows the western sky,  
till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie,  
and a glad sound comes with the setting sun, "Servants, well done."

### **Gospel – Matthew 16:21-28**

**Sermon**

The Rev. Charles Rowins

## **Nicene Creed – page 358**

*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 and the Son.  
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 Form IV – page 388**

Let us pray for the Church and for the world.

Grant, Almighty God, that all who confess your Name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

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

Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good.

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

Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others and to your honor and glory.

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

Bless all whose lives are closely linked with ours, and grant that we may serve Christ in them, and love one another as he loves us.

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

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

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

We commend to your mercy all who have died, that your will for them may be fulfilled; and we pray that we may share with all your saints in your eternal kingdom.

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

## **Confession and Absolution – page 360**

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

*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.*

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

### **The Peace – page 360**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
*And also with you.*

### **Announcements and Preparation of the Table**

#### **Eucharistic Prayer – page 361**

The Lord be with you.  
*And also with you.*  
Lift up your hearts.  
*We lift them to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
*It is right to give him thanks and praise.*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Therefore we praise, you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name:

*Holy, holy holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.*

Holy and gracious Father: In your infinite love you made us for yourself; and, when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, you, in your mercy, sent Jesus Christ, your only and eternal Son, to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out his arms upon the cross, and offered himself, in obedience to your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:  
*Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.*

We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling his death, resurrection, and ascension, we offer you these gifts.

Sanctify them by your Holy Spirit to be for your people the Body and Blood of your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this holy Sacrament, and serve you in unity, constancy, and peace; and at the last day bring us with all your saints into the joy of your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through your Son Jesus Christ. By him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.

## **Lord's Prayer**

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.*

## **Breaking of the Bread**

Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.  
*Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.*

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.

## **Communion**

### **Post Communion Prayer – BCP pge 365**

*Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us  
as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,  
And you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.  
Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage  
to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Hymn 375 – Give praise and glory**

Give praise and glory unto God, the Father of all blessing;  
his mighty wonders tell abroad, his graciousness confessing.  
'With balm my inmost heart he fills, his comfort all my anguish stills.  
To God be praise and glory.

The host of heaven praiseth thee, O Lord of all dominion;  
and mortals then, on land and sea, beneath thy shadowing pinion,  
exult in thy creative might that doeth all things well and right.  
To God be praise and glory.

What God hath wrought to show his power he evermore sustaineth;  
he watches o'er us every hour, his mercy never waneth.  
'Through all his kingdom's wide domain, his righteousness and justice reign.  
To God be praise and glory.

### **Dismissal**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!*