

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, the 3rd Sunday after Pentecost, June 18, 2023.

Sometimes the lessons appointed for a particular Sunday don't seem to fit the secular calendar. Other times, though, the fit is remarkable.

Today is Father's Day. Are the appointed lessons for the 3rd Sunday of Pentecost a good fit for Father's Day.

I would argue that the fit is remarkable.

Let's start with the Collect. "Proclaim truth with boldness." "Minister justice with compassion."

Those are pretty high standards. But aren't these the standards that, as fathers, we would like to pass on to our children by how we treat them and how we expect them to treat others? I think so.

What about the passage from Exodus? "So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the Lord commanded." And the people answered "Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do."

Parents do a lot of summoning. "Round up your brothers and sisters; I need to talk to you. Right now." And, having summoned the children, don't we as parents hope that the children will take our words to heart and improve their behavior? "Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do." Right.

Today's Psalm is ambitious as well. "Be joyful." "Know this." "Give thanks." "The Lord is good." These are the directions that parents enjoy giving. And there's no better feeling for parents than for the children to take these directions to heart.

The passage from Romans is a tough one to articulate to children. It's hard enough for us as adults to absorb. "Boast in our sufferings." "Suffering produces endurance." "Endurance produces character." Really? But, imagine raising children without addressing how best to respond to setbacks, especially setbacks we ourselves have caused.

And then we have today's Gospel passage. Jesus tells the disciples "to cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." But he also tells them to do these things without payment. And later he tells the disciples that he is sending them out "like sheep into the midst of wolves." Thanks a lot, Dad.

But isn't "tough love" at the heart of effective parenting? Yes, it is. But Jesus also says, "But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

In other words, Mom and Dad, take heart. Parenting is tough, but it is also rewarding. And it is essential to the health of a family and a community and a nation and a world.

In fact, isn't it true that one of the best conversations we have with our children are those that the children initiate? "Remember, Dad, all those things you encouraged me to do. And all those things that I didn't do for a long time. Well, I finally did some of them, and you were right. And I thank you. And I love you."

Wow! That was special. What a gift on Father's Day.

Yes, the power of "thank you" and "I love you." But also the power of "You need to shape up, or all those things that you hope for won't happen."

I don't know which is tougher. To be the parent or to be the child. Both roles are challenging. But both are also rewarding. Maybe that's why you and I get to exercise both roles. A gift from the Lord.

And it's a gift that comes with instructions. Don't lose the instructions. That's what the Bible is at its best. It's what the church should be at its best. A gift that reminds us who we are and whose we are. Children of a loving God, with an expectation that we love others as Jesus loved us (past tense), and loves us (present tense), and will love us always (future tense).

Yes, God's gift is grammar. Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One in three and three in one. So, Dads, don't be disappointed if your Father's Day gift is a textbook focusing on verb tenses. Past, present, future. It's a healthy reminder, something we can use right now, and something we can pass on to our children to pass on to their children.

It's the gift of a comprehensive Faith in a loving God. Perhaps the very best gift that we can receive and in turn share so that our children can in turn share. Their sharing time is coming, after all. For many of our children, that time has already arrived. Every generation looks to parents for guidance. Which means that we need to be really thoughtful about what and whom we share and model.

Yes, we can't forget the modeling part. And when we do forget the modeling part or fall short in terms of setting a good example, we can't forget the forgiveness part of our Faith. Both the giving and receiving. Jesus had every reason in the world to forget the forgiveness part, but he did not. Even on the Cross he found the strength, the faith, the conviction, the courage to ask his Father in Heaven to forgive those who were persecuting him.

You and I can seek the same forgiveness. It was the central part of our Lord's faith, and it can be the central part of our faith, and it can be the central part of our children's faith. It's a very special gift to receive and to pass on. We remember both elements today. Happy Father's Day.

Amen.

Service of Holy Communion
Fathers Day - Pentecost 3 - June 18, 2023

Hymn 587 – Our Father, by whose Name

Our Father, by whose Name all fatherhood is known,
who dost in love proclaim each family thine own,
bless thou all parents, guarding well, with constant love as sentinel,
the homes in which they people dwell.

O Christ, thyself a child within an earthly home,
with heart still undefiled, thou didst to manhood come;
our children bless, in every place, that they may all behold thy face,
and knowing thee may grow in grace.

O Spirit, who dost bind our hearts in unity,
who teachest us to find the love from self set free,
in all our hearts such love increase, that every home, by this release,
may be the dwelling place of peace.

Page 355

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.

Pentecost 3 Collect

Keep, O Lord your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

First Reading – Exodus 19:2-8a

Psalm 100

Second Reading – Romans 5:1-8

Hymn 627 – Lamp of our feet – stanzas 1-3

Lamp of our feet, whereby we trace our path when wont to stray;
stream from the fount of heavenly grace, brook by the traveler's way;

bread of our souls, whereon we feed, true manna from on high;
our guide and chart, wherein we read of realms beyond the sky;

pillar of fire, through watches dark, and radiant cloud by day;
when waves would whelm our tossing bark, our anchor and our stay;

Gospel – Matthew 9:35-10:8

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 you love, and reveal your glory in the world.

Lord, in you 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

Offertory Sentence

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and give himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

Doxology - Hymn 380, verse 4

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. Amen.

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

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 336 – Come with us, O blessed Jesus

Come with us, O blessed Jesus, with us evermore to be;
and though leaving now thine altar, let us never more leave thee.
Be thou one with us for ever, in our life thy love divine
our own flesh and blood has taken, and to us thou givest thine.

Come with us, O mighty Savior, God from God, and Light from Light;
thou art God, thy glory veiling, so that we may bear the sight.
Now we go to seek and serve thee, through work as through our prayer;
Grant us light to see and know thee, in thy people everywhere.

Come with us, O King of glory by angelic voices praise;
In our hearts as in thy heaven, be enraptured anthems raised.
Let the mighty chorus ever sing its glad exultant songs;
let its hymn be heard for ever peace for which creation longs.

Dismissal

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

Lessons for 3rd Sunday after Pentecost – June 18, 2023

Collect: Keep, O Lord, your household the Church in your steadfast faith and love, that through your grace we may proclaim your truth with boldness, and minister your justice with compassion; for the sake of our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Exodus 19:2-8a

When the people of Israel had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness: Israel camped there in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the people. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.” So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. The people all answered as one: “Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do.”

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

Psalm 100

Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands;

serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.

Know this: The Lord himself is God;

He himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving; go into his courts with praise;

give thanks to him and call upon his Name.

For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting;

and his faithfulness endures from age to age.

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-8

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured in our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

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

Gospel: Matthew 9:35-10:23

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, and the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it.

If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town. See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brethren will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the son of Man comes.”

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