

Lay Preacher's Bulletin - October 2025

*October's lectionary notes have been provided by The Rev. Chris Roth, Incumbent
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October 5 – Pentecost 17

Propers – BAS page 384

GOSPEL: [Luke 17:5-10](#)

Our Gospel passage is found at the end of a section of Luke where Jesus is dealing with opposition from the Pharisees (13:10-17:10). Jesus is accused of violating the sabbath by healing on the Sabbath, he argued that there is a category of activity that is allowed on the Sabbath. Compassionate healing should be categorized among the allowable activities. Jesus tells parables about the kingdom of God (about a mustard seed, and yeast). And in response to a question about who will be saved, Jesus speaks about a narrow door that not many will enter, which is followed by Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem. There is a recurring theme with the Pharisees that has to do with their attitude towards the poor/lost, and also the use of money. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is found in this section, which highlights the opposing views of God (the slave master vs the loving Father). Our present Gospel reading concludes this section of Luke, which includes instructions to the disciples on not causing “little ones” to stumble, confronting other believers when they sin, continuous forgiveness, faith, and devoted servanthood.

The apostles feel overwhelmed by the demands of discipleship and seek more faith to meet these challenges. Jesus responds by emphasizing that even a small amount of faith (or trust in God), like a mustard seed, can accomplish great things. While a mustard seed was famously small, it could become quite invasive and hard to control. He illustrates the power of ‘mustard seed faith’ with the metaphor of a mulberry tree being uprooted and planted in the sea with just a little faith. This

highlights that the power of faith lies not in its quantity but in the greatness of the God in whom they trust.

Furthermore, Jesus uses the analogy of a servant to teach about humility and duty. He explains that a servant does not expect special thanks for doing what is expected. Similarly, disciples should see their acts of service as their duty and not as something that puts God in their debt. This teaching aims to curb spiritual pride and remind disciples that their service flows out of gratitude for God's grace.

Questions for reflection:

1. How do you respond when faced with teachings or challenges that seem too difficult to handle?
2. Considering the analogy of the servant in Luke 17:7-10, how do you view your acts of service to God and others? Is there a sense that God or others are in your debt when you do an act of service? Do we expect rewards or recognition? Is it enough to serve out of love for God?

October 12 – Harvest Thanksgiving

Propers – BAS page 396

GOSPEL: [John 6:25-35](#)

John 6:25-35 is found in a second Passover narrative (6:1-71) (the first Passover narrative being found in John 2:13-4:54). Here we find Jesus acting as the expected messianic “prophet like [Moses]” (Deut 18:18)- feeding the multitude in the wilderness. In John 6:25-35, we encounter a crowd that had previously witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes. They seek out Jesus, but don’t fully understanding the deeper significance of the miracle. Jesus offers himself as the bread of life, offering his “flesh” and his “blood”, which foreshadows the final Passover (chapters 13-20). This second Passover narrative ends with many disciples being unable to accept Jesus’ teachings and leaving him (6:66).

The crowd that comes to Jesus fails to see the deeper meaning of the bread “sign” (6:26). Their attention remains fixed on the material level and the hope that Jesus would provide for their physical needs.

The feeding of the multitude connects to the Exodus and God providing flakey bread-like “Manna” (literally “what is it?”) to sustain the Hebrews as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (see Exodus 16). Jesus fulfills and transcends this Exodus experience by offering them the bread of life that will fulfil their hunger.

Jesus' declaration, "I am the bread of life," invites the crowd to feed on him. Bread was used to eat the rest of a meal. It was a foundational necessity for the meals the crowd grew up eating. What does it mean for Jesus to be that foundational to our life?

This passage has obvious eucharistic connections, which becomes more obvious when we read past the assigned reading and see Jesus offer his flesh and blood (6:53). It is an odd image given the Kosher dietary restrictions that forbade the consuming of blood (Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10-14; Deut 12:23; Acts 15:28-29).

Being Thanksgiving Sunday, it may be helpful to connect the word “thanksgiving” to the word “Eucharist”, which means thanksgiving in Greek. Our Eucharist meal is a thanksgiving meal where we consume the bread of life that Jesus offered us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Are there times when your attention is too tied to the material realm?
2. Perhaps there is a deeper hunger in your life?
3. How can we shift our attention deeper?
4. I know a woman (who isn't a believer) who told me that she prayed once. With embarrassment, she told me that she prayed to lose weight. She was embarrassed to tell me this because she thought it was selfish, and she thought that the eternal God (if there is one) would have better and more important things to do. I think God hears those prayers, but I think it is important to chase down the root of that desire. Why did my friend want to lose weight?
5. She had a pretty bad self-image. She didn't have much confidence. What did she really desire?
6. She wasn't dangerously overweight. She desired to be desirable. She thought she might be more attractive if she lost weight. Well, why wish to be more attractive? Perhaps she was lonely. Perhaps she wanted to feel better about herself. Perhaps she wanted someone to share her life with- someone who would know everything about her, and maybe someone she could learn everything about. Perhaps her prayer to lose weight was really a prayer to be loved. There is nothing silly about praying to be loved.
7. This is thanksgiving Sunday; how does the practice of thanksgiving shape your view of the world and your relationship with God?
8. How can you incorporate thanksgiving more regularly into your communal and spiritual practices (considering it is present throughout our Scriptures and liturgy)?

October 19 - Pentecost 19

Propers – BAS page 386

GOSPEL: [Luke 18:1-8](#)

Context:

Our Gospel reading comes from a section of Luke (17:11-19:27) that is nearing the teaching in the temple which will then lead to his arrest and crucifixion. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem in this section, which might be described as the proper way to respond to the kingdom- thankfulness (17:11-19, note the presence of a Samaritan in the healing of ten lepers); faithfulness (17:20-18:8- preparing for the sudden and unpredictable arrival of the Son of Man- and the parable of the persistent widow); humility (18:9-17- the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector- and the teaching to be like children); and the problem of wealth (18:18-30- The rich ruler who left Jesus). There is a third prediction of Jesus' coming death (18:31-34). Jesus heals a blind man near Jericho, and meets the repentant tax collector Zacchaeus (18:35-19:10). This section ends with a parable where servants are trusted with some of the master's wealth (19:11-27), which seems to be encouraging his disciples to be faithful with what he has left them, in preparation for his coming absence.

Our Gospel reading is 18:1-8- The parable of the widow who begs for justice. The point of the parable is given at the beginning "Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart".

There was a bad judge, who didn't fear God nor respected people. There was a widow who was seeking justice. Widows were particularly vulnerable in Jesus' society, especially if they were unable to remarry or gain another male family member to care for her. Particular direction was given to care for widows (e.g. Exodus 22:22-24; Deuteronomy 10:18). The widow is a symbol of a person with little social power. The judge ignored this widow for a while, but eventually gave in to her because of her persistence.

Basically, the bad judge doesn't care about justice, but to get this woman to stop bothering him, he gives her what she wants.

If a bad judge can be moved to give justice to a widow due to her persistence, then how much more will God, our Heavenly Father, who is just and loving, want to give justice to his children who persistently cry out to Him?

This parable teaches persistence in prayer because God is not indifferent.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Do you see the persistent widow reflected in your prayer life?
2. Or, do you see the discouragement that the parable warns against - as though God doesn't really care?
3. How do we hold this parable alongside the injustices we see in our world and in our lives?

October 26 - Pentecost 20

Propers – BAS page 388

GOSPEL: [Luke 18:9-14](#)

Context:

Our Gospel reading comes from a section of Luke (17:11-19:27) that is nearing the teaching in the temple which will then lead to his arrest and crucifixion. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem in this section, which might be described as the proper way to respond to the kingdom- thankfulness (17:11-19, note the presence of a Samaritan in the healing of ten lepers); faithfulness (17:20-18:8- preparing for the sudden and unpredictable arrival of the Son of Man- and the parable of the persistent widow); humility (18:9-17- the parable of the pharisee and the tax collector- and the teaching to be like children); and the problem of wealth (18:18-30- The rich ruler who left Jesus). There is a third prediction of Jesus' coming death (18:31-34). Jesus heals a blind man near Jericho, and meets the repentant tax collector Zacchaeus (18:35-19:10). This section ends with a parable where servants are trusted with some of the master's wealth (19:11-27), which seems to be encouraging his disciples to be faithful with what he has left them, in preparation for his coming absence.

Our present Gospel reading (Luke 18:8-14) is often called the Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-Collector. Jesus is wanting to draw our attention to the attitude of the heart as we approach God. This parable is part of Jesus' teachings on humility and pride, and emphasizes the importance of a repentant heart.

Socially, the Pharisee is righteous, and the tax collector is a sinner. Jesus is looking inward- into the heart of both characters in this parable.

Pharisees were very respected religious leaders. Who were famous for attempting to strictly apply the Law to their lives. Generally, this is a good thing. Jesus even speaks highly of their teaching at times (Matt 23:2-3). Jesus is pointing out how a religious life can subtly tempt us to 'put on a show' and glorify ourselves- "The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed [or prayed to himself] thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'" (Luke 18:11-12). The

Pharisee isn't just 'not bad' (he isn't like the tax collector), he's actually really good. He even goes beyond the requirements of the law. The Old Testament requires fasting on certain days in relation to festivals, but the Pharisee fasts twice a week. The Old Testament requires a Tithe, or 10%, from certain kinds of income, but he tithes on 'everything' he has. He has gone above and beyond the call of duty.

Tax Collectors, on the other hand, were considered traitors. Imagine a Jewish person working to gather taxes from fellow Jews for the Nazis in the 1940's, and you start to get a sense of what their countrymen thought of tax collectors. The Romans were an oppressive empire that dealt brutally with non-Romans. To give taxes to them, was to support their empire. Tax collectors were also known for asking for more than Rome required and keeping the rest. Rome didn't seem to care about such corruption as long as they got what they wanted. Many tax collectors became wealthy squeezing their fellow Jews, and they were despised for it.

The parable speaks to the virtues of pride and humility. Theologically, pride has often been called the root of all sin while humility has been called the root of all virtue. St. Augustine says that humility is "the foundation of all the other virtues; hence, in the soul in which this virtue does not exist, there cannot be any other virtue except in mere appearance". Sometimes people have the sense that humility means that God wants us to have bad self-esteem. Humility, rather, is seeing yourself accurately before God. What God wants is repentance, or "metanoia". He wants us to be continually open to correction. This starts with humility. The Pharisee's prayer is self-righteous, while the tax collector's prayer is a humble plea for mercy. Jesus declares that it was the tax collector who walked away being made right with God, rather than the Pharisee.

The prayer of the tax collector has inspired the Jesus Prayer, that has influenced the prayer life of Eastern Christianity since the 300s AD. "Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner".

Questions for Reflection:

1. How do we see ourselves reflected in the images of the Pharisee and the tax collector?

2. For example, do we ever participate in “virtue signaling” or “moral grandstanding” to make ourselves appear to others as moral (see Matt 6:5,16)?
3. Do we ever elevate ourselves over others for our moral actions or attitudes?
4. Why are humility and repentance so important to Jesus?
5. How would one give birth to sin and the other give birth to virtue?