

**September 13, 2020**  
**Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost**



“**Forgive** your  
**brother** or **sister**  
from your **heart**.”

**MATTHEW 18:35, NRSV**

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## **Introduction**

In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

## **WELCOME**

### **Confession and Forgiveness**

Gracious God,  
**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**  
**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

## **GATHERING HYMN    NO LONGER SLAVES**

**You unravel me with a melody,  
You surround me with a song  
Of deliverance from my enemies  
'Til all my fears are gone**

**I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God  
I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God**

**From my mother's womb,  
You have chosen me  
Your Love has called my name  
I've been born again into your family  
Your blood flows through my veins**

**I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God  
I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God**

**I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God  
I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God**

**You split the sea so I could walk right through it  
My fears were drowned in perfect love  
You rescued me and I will stand and sing  
I am a child of God.**

**You split the sea so I could walk right through it  
My fears were drowned in perfect love  
You rescued me and I will stand and sing  
I am a child of God.**

**I am a child of God I am a child of  
God I am a child of God**

**I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God  
I'm no longer a slave to fear, I am a child of God**

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **FIRST READING: GENESIS 50:15-21**

<sup>15</sup>Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" <sup>16</sup>So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, <sup>17</sup>'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. <sup>18</sup>Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." <sup>19</sup>But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup>Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. <sup>21</sup>So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

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

## **PSALM 103:8-13**

<sup>8</sup>LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,  
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;

<sup>9</sup>you will not always accuse us,  
nor will you keep your anger forever.

<sup>10</sup>You have not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.

<sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.

<sup>12</sup>As far as the east is from the west,  
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.

<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion for his children,  
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

## **SECOND READING: ROMANS 14:1-12**

<sup>1</sup>Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. <sup>2</sup>Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. <sup>4</sup>Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

<sup>5</sup>Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. <sup>6</sup>Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

<sup>7</sup>We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. <sup>8</sup>If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. <sup>9</sup>For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

<sup>10</sup>Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. <sup>11</sup>For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” <sup>12</sup>So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

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

## **GOSPEL: MATTHEW 18:21-35**

The holy gospel according Matthew. **Glory to You, O Lord!**

<sup>21</sup>Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?”

<sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

<sup>23</sup>“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

<sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **HOMILY**

**HYMN OF THE DAY      Your Presence is Heaven to me**

**Who is like You Lord in all the earth  
Matchless love and beauty endless worth  
For nothing in this world can satisfy  
Jesus You're the cup that won't run dry**

**Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me**

**Treasure of my heart and of my soul  
In my weakness You are merciful**

**Redeemer of my past and present wrong  
Holder of my future days to come**

**Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me**

**Oh Jesus oh Jesus  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Oh Jesus oh Jesus  
Your presence is heaven to me**

*(Drum Break)*

**Oh Jesus oh Jesus  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Oh Jesus oh Jesus  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me  
Your presence is heaven to me**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*Each prayer petition ends*

O God, you are full of compassion;  
**receive our prayer.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

*The gifts we use and share matter! Thank you for sharing your gifts for the sake of the world. Use the green Give button on our church's website to support our mission of nurturing lives for following Christ.*

## **THANKSGIVING FOR THE BODY OF CHRIST**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being.

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you.

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love.

For your Word of life, O God, we give you thanks and praise.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took a towel and wrapped it around his waist, and washed the disciples' feet, saying: if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

And after supper, when he had gone out, Jesus said to the disciples: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

For where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, the body of Christ is present, with us always, to the end of the age.

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **BLESSING**

Mothering God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and lead you into the way of truth and life. **Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN MY STRENGTH**

**Oh oh oh oh oh....**

**My strength, My strength,  
O the joy of the Lord is  
My strength, My strength,  
O the joy of the Lord is  
My strength that is enough  
To overcome the world**

**You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the peace inside I can't explain  
You're the strength I need, You will always be**

**My strength, My strength,  
O the joy of the Lord is  
My strength, My strength,  
O the joy of the Lord is  
My strength that is enough  
To overcome the world**

**You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the peace inside I can't explain  
You're the strength I need, You will always be**

**You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the peace inside I can't explain  
You're the strength I need, You will always be**

**Stronger, stronger I'm getting stronger  
The joy of the Lord, it makes me stronger  
Greater, greater, my God is greater**

**His power, His power, it makes me stronger**

**Stronger, stronger I'm getting stronger  
The joy of the Lord, it makes me stronger  
Greater, greater, my God is greater  
His power, His power, it makes me stronger**

**You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the joy no one can take away  
You're the peace inside I can't explain  
You're the strength I need, You will always be**

## **DISMISSAL**

**Go in peace, nurturing lives for following Christ.  
Thanks be to God.**

## **POSTLUDE**

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*"No Longer Slaves"*

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