

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church
Arvada, Colorado***

Sunday Family Devotion in Absence

Fourth Sunday after Trinity

July 5, 2020

The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH)

OPENING HYMN *TLH 412 “May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfil”*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

INTROIT *Psalm 27:1-4a, 5*

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh,

my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;

though war arise against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;

he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will lift me high upon a rock.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

O Lord, grant that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Your governance that Your Church may joyfully serve You in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT *Genesis 50:15-21*

¹⁵ When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.” ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died: ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, “Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.”’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should

be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. (ESV)

GRADUAL *Psalm 79:9-10a*

Atone for our sins, for your name’s sake!

Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?”

Help us, O God of our salvation,

for the glory of your name deliver us.

EPISTLE *Romans 12:14-21*

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (ESV)

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 6:36-42*

³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. ³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.” ³⁹ He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. ⁴¹ Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴² How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye. (ESV)

SERMON HYMN *TLH 395 “O God, Thou Faithful God”*

SERMON

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” But our sinful flesh wants to take revenge, we want to get back at someone for the harm they have caused us or our loved ones. Our Lord makes it clear for us Christians that there is no place in our lives for unauthorized retribution and vengeance against someone who has caused harm. Penalties for wrongdoing are only conducted by those whom the Lord authorizes in each situation, such as the police, judges, juries, parents, pastors (in Spiritual matters), or even God himself. The Lord works through the proper channels to bring about civil justice; but it is evil when people take matters into their own hands to get vengeance on an offender. What I am talking about here is when there is a legitimate grievance, when someone has actually committed a crime or scandal. Luther’s explanation to the Eighth Commandment goes so far as to forbid the destruction of the offender’s reputation until the proper authorities begin the punishment. Even if a wicked person gets away

with their crime by escaping human punishment, they will ultimately be dealt with by God. Thus, there is no place for vengeance in the Christian life.

How much more vile are activities that result from false grievance! It seems that in our culture today the grievance industry is thriving. People, often Christians, lose their jobs, their possessions, or even their lives because of public shaming that results from living in a “cancel culture.” Under the pretense of victimhood, there are political movements and organizations that use the faults and crimes of some individuals to broadly condemn innocent people. In the news, we have heard the Me Too movement, Black Lives Matter Inc., and Antifa all accuse the people of the United States of being predators, having systemic racism, and stealing other people’s property. This is not only false; it is sheer evil! If it is sinful for a person to take revenge for a real wrongdoing, then how much more sinful is it to harm innocent people!

It is not wrong for us to protect ourselves and loved ones. It is not sinful for us to desire punishment for those who do wrong. Especially in such a great nation as ours, and as we celebrate Independence Day, our civil society can thrive only if lawlessness is punished and our protections and freedoms under our constitution are upheld. It is the responsibility of the God-given authorities to ensure our safety and punish criminals; and we Christians can never take matters into our own hands to seek revenge and punishment ... even in the process of defending ourselves and others. “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

In normal everyday life, however, we seldom face such vile activities like what we see by the anarchists ravaging the cities in our nation. Still, people do offend us and sin against us (and it’s usually those who are closest to us). Especially in such cases, and especially if the person who has wronged us is a fellow Christian, we must forgive. In the Old Testament reading, we heard the example of Joseph who forgave his brothers for selling him into slavery. In the Gospel reading Jesus says, “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven.” And as St. Paul says in the Epistle reading for today, “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. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Hopefully, we don’t ever consider one of our fellow Christians, especially those in our own family, as an “enemy.” The Scriptural mandate applies also to our dealings with the people who are closest to us. We are to be merciful, forgiving, and kind when they sin against us. After all, we have sinned against our Lord many times and he forgives us for the sake of Christ’s death and resurrection. Our Heavenly Father continues to welcome us back to himself through Holy Absolution and give us the Body and Blood of Christ for our remission of sins and eternal life. In this new life in Christ, we even forgive those who our real enemies, because we believe in the hope of our own resurrection in the flesh to live in the glorious kingdom of God for all eternity. Amen!

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN TLH 398 *“Renew Me, O Eternal Light”*

COLLECT FOR THE WORD

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER

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.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN TLH 244 *“Glory be to God the Father”*

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY: 1 Kings 19:11-21; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; Luke 5:1-11.