

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church
Arvada, Colorado
Family Devotion in Absence
Ninth Sunday after Trinity - August 9, 2020
Lutheran Service Book (LSB)***

OPENING HYMN *LSB 730 “What Is the World to Me”*

INVOCATION

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

INTROIT *Psalm 54:1-5, 7*

Behold, God is my helper;
the Lord is the upholder of my life.
He will return the evil to my enemies;
in your faithfulness put an end to them.
O God, save me, by your name,
and vindicate me by your might.
O God, hear my prayer;
give ear to the words of my mouth.
For strangers have risen against me; ruthless men seek my life;
they do not set God before themselves.
For he has delivered me from every trouble,
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.
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

Let Your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of Your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT *2 Samuel 22:26-34*

²⁶ With the merciful you show yourself merciful; with the blameless man you show yourself blameless; ²⁷ with the purified you deal purely, and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous. ²⁸ You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down. ²⁹ For you are my lamp, O LORD, and my God lightens my darkness. ³⁰ For by you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall. ³¹ This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. ³² For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God? ³³ This God is my strong refuge and has made my way blameless. ³⁴ He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights. (ESV)

GRADUAL *Psalm 8:1*

O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory
above the heavens.

EPISTLE *1 Corinthians 10:6-13*

⁶Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. ⁷Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” ⁸We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. ⁹We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, ¹⁰nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. ¹¹Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹²Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (ESV)

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 16:1-13*

¹He also said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. ²And he called him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.’ ³And the manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. ⁴I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.’ ⁵So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ⁶He said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ ⁷Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ ⁸The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings. ¹⁰“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? ¹³No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (ESV)

SERMON HYMN *LSB 536 “One Thing's Needful”*

SERMON

Jesus says, “You cannot serve God and money.” Actually, the Greek word translated here as “money” is mammon. It means more than just money but does include it. The word “mammon” encompasses the idea of wealth, possessions, property, and all things of worldly value. So when Jesus says, “You cannot serve both God and money,” he means that we cannot

have it both ways. This is seen in his words in the previous sentence, “No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” You cannot serve both God and money (wealth, possessions, property, and worldly things), but you can serve God *with* your money and all that you have in your control. That’s the larger point of the reading from Luke for today. It’s really about that often despised and therefore neglected idea of {whisper it} *stewardship*.

So often, we wrongly think of stewardship in terms of legalism and extorting money out of people either for projects or needs at church. But that’s not it at all! Stewardship – as we see from the Gospel reading – is about management. A steward is a manager, someone who is entrusted with someone else’s money and possessions to manage them and use them the way that the owner wants them to be used. Our problem as sinful people is that we think that we are owners and not managers. But the Bible makes it clear that we don’t own anything. The Scriptures teach that God owns the Earth and everything in it. We don’t even own our own bodies and lives, much less our money and possessions. This is most clearly understood with the old saying, “you can’t take it with you when you die.” We Christians do well to remember that everything we have is not ours. We are stewards, managers of God’s things. Our bodies, minds, souls, money, possessions, property, and all that we have belongs to God; and he has given us the responsibility and privilege of using our lives and possessions to serve him by serving others according to their needs – beginning with our own immediate families – as well as for our own enjoyment. But when we *only* use what God has entrusted to us for our own pleasure, then there is a problem ... a spiritual problem. So, as stewards and managers of God’s things we need to ask how is it that he wants us to live and use his things?

The life of a Christian steward is simply the life of faith and love in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christ, our faith receives what God gives, first of all for our salvation in his Word, Baptism, Absolution, and Communion, and secondly our faith receives our temporal things, our bodies, minds, souls, money, possessions, property, and all that we have from God. In Christ, our love gives first of all to God as a living sacrifice all that we have received from him by the Holy Spirit, and secondly our love serves God by serving our fellow human beings according to their physical and Spiritual needs. We serve people’s physical needs, beginning with our own families and extending to others, by providing food, clothing, and shelter. We serve people’s Spiritual needs beginning with our own congregation, our Spiritual family at Risen Christ Lutheran Church, and extending to the church at large. We do this, by offering our time and effort to help our members both at church and in their individual lives. And {here it comes} we serve people’s Spiritual needs by giving our tithes and offerings to support the Holy Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. That’s Biblical! God gives us our lives and possessions, most importantly, so that we and others can have eternal salvation in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit working in us through the Word and Sacraments. As the Bible teaches, we love because God first loves us; we serve because God first serves us; we give because God first gives to us. As good stewards and managers of God’s things, we are blessed by him ... and in the end he will declare “well done! you good and faithful servant.”

None of us, as God’s people, has been completely faithful in our management of God’s things. For that we must repent and strive to do better. In repentance, Christ’s arms are wide open to you ... as wide as they were stretched out on the cross. And by the power of his resurrection he offers eternal life and a new self-giving, self-less, sacrificial life in him. His forgiveness is yours through Holy Absolution. His eternal life is yours through your Holy Baptism, which eternal life he sustains in you through his Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

Through his Word and these Sacraments, the Father gives you the Holy Spirit and draws you into Christ and unto himself; and this same Holy Spirit moves you from the inside out to love God and to love your fellow human beings. That is what it means to be a Christian steward. 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 *LSB 714 “Who Trusts in God a Strong Abode”*

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 *LSB 782 “Gracious God, You Send Great Blessings”*

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY: Jeremiah 7:1-11; Romans 9:30—10:4; Luke 19:41-48.

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