

23rd Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, November 8, 2020

Introduction to the day

Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND VETERANS DAY PRAYER

Almighty and ever-living God, we give you thanks for the men and women who have served and defended our country and the values of freedom and justice we hold so dear. Help us be mindful of the sacrifices they made and the hardship endured by their families and friends, so that we never take for granted the privileges they have secured for us. Hear us, we pray, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

GATHERING SONG: Praise Ye the Lord

Refrain

Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah!
Ev'rybody praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord, hallelujah!
Ev'rybody praise the Lord.

- 1 Praise God with the sound of the trumpet;
praise God with the lute and the harp;
praise God with the timbrel and dancing;
praise God wherever you are. *Refrain*
- 2 Praise God with holy cymbals;
praise God with strings and with pipes;
praise God with clashing cymbals;
praise God with all of your might. *Refrain*
- 3 Praise God in the holy temple;
praise God for almighty deeds;
praise God for those bountiful mercies;
for God fulfills our needs. *Refrain*
- 4 Praise God on top of the mountains;
praise God both day and night;
praise God down in the low valleys;
praise God because it's all right. *Refrain*

Text: J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1937-1986, based on Psalm 150

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved. **Amen.**

Holy One,
we confess that we are not awake for you.
We are not faithful in using your gifts.
We forget the least of our siblings.
We do not see your beautiful image in one another.
We are infected by sin
that divides your beloved community.
Open our hearts to your coming,
open our eyes to see you in our neighbor,
open our hands to serve your creation. Amen.

Beloved, we are God's children, and Jesus, our Beloved, opens the door to us. Through Jesus you are forgiven, by Jesus you are welcome, in Jesus you are called to rejoice! Let us live in the promises prepared for us from the foundation of the world. **Amen.**

OPENING SONG: Bring Forth The Kingdom

Verse 1

You are salt for the earth, O people,
salt for the city of God!
Share the flavor of life, O people:
life in the kingdom of God!

Refrain

Bring forth the kingdom of mercy,
bring forth the kingdom of peace.
Bring forth the kingdom of justice,
bring forth the kingdom of God!

Verse 2

You are a light on the hill, O people,
light for the city of God!
Shine so holy and bright, O people:
shine for the kingdom of God!

Refrain

Verse 3

You are a seed of the word, O people,
bring forth the kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
grow in the kingdom of God!
Refrain

Verse 4

We are the bless'd and a pilgrim people,
bound for the kingdom of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland:
love is the kingdom of God!
Refrain

Text: Marty Haugen C GIA Publications
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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 God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC: Lift Every Voice and Sing (Johnson/Johnson/Pote)

FIRST READING: Amos 5:18-24

A reading from Amos.

In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.

¹⁸Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light;

¹⁹as if someone fled from a lion,

and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
²²Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.
²³Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
²⁴But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

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

PSALM: Psalm 70

¹Be pleased, O God, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me.
²**Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded;
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.**
³Let those who say to me “Aha!” and gloat over me
turn back because of their shame.
⁴**Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;
let those who love your salvation say forever, “Great is the LORD!”**
⁵But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God.
You are my helper and my deliverer; O LORD, do not tarry.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.

¹³We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. ¹⁴For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. ¹⁵For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. ¹⁶For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call and with the sound of God’s trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 25:1-13

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

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

[Jesus said to the disciples:] ¹“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ ⁷Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ ¹²But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

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

SERMON "LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS"

HYMN OF THE DAY: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

- 1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
and let your lights appear;
the evening is advancing,
and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising
and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
at midnight comes the cry.
- 2 The watchers on the mountain
proclaim the bridegroom near;
go forth as he approaches
with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting;
the gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory;
the bridegroom is at hand.
- 3 The saints, who here in patience
their cross and suff'rings bore,

shall live and reign forever
when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
the Lamb they shall behold;
in triumph cast before him
their diadems of gold.

- 4 Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
arise, O Sun so longed for,
o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
we plead, O Lord, to see
the day of earth's redemption
that sets your people free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660-1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823-1907

CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**
**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PEACE

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

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Longing for Christ's reign to come among us, we pray for the outpouring of God's power on the church, the world, and all in need.

Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.

BLESSING

May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad! The blessing of God, Sovereign, Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG: O God, Our Help in Ages Past

- 1 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:

- 2 Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

- 3 Before the hills in order stood
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

- 4 A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.

- 5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
bears all our years away;
they fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the op'ning day.

- 6 O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,

still be our guard while troubles last
and our eternal home.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

DISMISSAL

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

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