

## Worship in the Home: Sunday, July 26, 2020

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### Worship in the Home

#### **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost Lectionary 17 July 26, 2020**

*In this time of world-wide crisis, congregations throughout this [church](#) are not able to gather for worship as the body of Christ. While you cannot be together in person, we can hear the word of God and hold each other in prayer. We offer this brief resource as an aid for prayer in the home. As with our prayers in the gathered assembly for worship, you are encouraged to prepare or adapt them locally for your context.*

Let us pray.

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your [kingdom](#) of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

#### **First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12**

<sup>5</sup>At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." <sup>6</sup>And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. <sup>7</sup>And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. <sup>8</sup>And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. <sup>9</sup>Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

<sup>10</sup>It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. <sup>11</sup>God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, <sup>12</sup>I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you."

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm: 119:129-136**

<sup>129</sup>Your decrees are wonderful;  
therefore I obey them with <sup>1</sup>all my heart.  
<sup>130</sup>When your word is opened <sup>1</sup>it gives light;  
it gives understanding <sup>1</sup>to the simple.  
<sup>131</sup>I open my <sup>1</sup>mouth and pant  
because I long for <sup>1</sup>your commandments.  
<sup>132</sup>Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
as you always do to those who <sup>1</sup>love your name.  
<sup>133</sup>Order my footsteps <sup>1</sup>in your word;  
let no iniquity have dominion <sup>1</sup>over me.  
<sup>134</sup>Rescue me from those <sup>1</sup>who oppress me,  
and I will keep <sup>1</sup>your commandments.  
<sup>135</sup>Let your face shine upon your servant  
and teach <sup>1</sup>me your statutes.  
<sup>136</sup>My eyes shed <sup>1</sup>streams of tears,  
because people do not <sup>1</sup>keep your teaching.

### **Second Reading: Romans 8:26-39**

<sup>26</sup>The Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. <sup>27</sup>And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. <sup>29</sup>For those whom God foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, in order that the Son might be the firstborn within a large family. <sup>30</sup>And those whom God predestined God also called; and those whom God called God also justified; and those whom God justified God also glorified.

<sup>31</sup>What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? <sup>32</sup>The very Son of God was not withheld, but was given up for all of us, will God not along with the Son also give us everything else? <sup>33</sup>Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. <sup>35</sup>Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;  
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

<sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>31</sup>Jesus put before the crowd another parable: "The dominion of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in a field; <sup>32</sup>it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

<sup>33</sup>Jesus told them another parable: "The dominion of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

<sup>44</sup>"The dominion of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

<sup>45</sup>"Again, the dominion of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup>"Again, the dominion of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; <sup>48</sup>when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. <sup>49</sup>So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous <sup>50</sup>and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup>"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." <sup>52</sup>And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the dominion of heaven is like a householder who brings out of the household treasure what is new and what is old."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## Reflection

*Having read these readings, think of this:*

It is not only that we do not know how to pray as we ought in this hard time. And it is not only that we do not have enough wisdom for the challenges we are facing. It is also, if we speak of the actual situation of our current world, that we are genuinely "being killed all day long" by "hardship or distress or peril" and certainly by disease. But there is light and wisdom and life in the word we read today. Jesus Christ himself is the finder of the treasure and the pearl, and he gives these away to us. His despised cross, his death with us, is the "bush" which becomes a tree in which we may shelter. The risen presence of this crucified one is like the bread of the woman, enough for a multitude and life-giving, though usual religion, worried about both leaven and the cross, would call it unclean. Such is the surprising dominion of God. Nothing can separate us from this love, even if we do not understand it. And the Spirit helps us in our weakness to pray for our needy world in this time and to pray that our leaders might have something like Solomon's wisdom.

*If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "Jesus, Priceless Treasurer" (JESU, MEINE FREUDE) (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 775) or God of Grace and God of Glory (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 705).*

[Jesus, Priceless Treasure](#)

[God of Grace and God of Glory](#)

From our many locations, yet held in one body by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need, responding to each petition with words from Psalm 119, Be gracious to us.

*A brief silence.*

For the church, O God of mercy, we pray. Open your word to Christians around the world. Reveal yourself to us in ways both traditional and surprising, in places old and new. Bless our bishops, pastors, deacons, and other church leaders, as they face their challenging tasks.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

For education and nurture in the church, O God of wisdom, we pray. Give us the will to seek your wisdom. Guide the many churches in their uses of technology, and show us during this time ways to study your word. As this week we commemorate J. S. Bach and other musicians, accompany all church musicians as they seek to [help](#) the church offer its praise.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

For the earth, O creative God, we pray. Give to plants and animals the water and land they require. Form us into grateful and healing caretakers of your earth. Bless the efforts of scientists and researchers, especially those seeking a vaccine. Lead all people to honor the scientific discoveries that you grant to humankind.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

For the nations, O God of justice, we pray. Direct leaders of nations to build trust with each other and to resist the ways of violence. Stifle the lust for conquest. Bring peace to the Middle East. Visit the people of Hong Kong. Move us away from racist attitudes and policies. Form our president, governor, and legislators to speak with honesty, to strive for justice, and to work to alleviate the nation's needs.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

For all in need, O God of compassion, we pray. Heal the sick. Feed the hungry. House the refugee. Comfort the countless thousands who are dealing with the coronavirus. Accompany those living with anxiety and despair. Form us to be your arms of mercy.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

For the youth, O God of grace, we pray. Give to the youth of afflicted nations an inspiring dream of what their future might be. Give them patience to await a time of safety. Direct all schools from daycare through graduate school to find an acceptable way forward.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

You, O God, are our pearl beyond price. You are the tree giving us eternal refuge. Hear now, we pray, the petitions of our hearts.

*A longer time of silence*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

In gratitude for the lives of our beloved dead, we pray that nothing, neither death nor life, will separate us from your love. At the end, gather us with all your saints in light everlasting.

*A brief silence.*

Turn to us, O God:

**be gracious to us.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

*If you have a hymnal (or using the graphic below), you might now sing or read "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 759), Be Thou My Vision (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 793), or All My Hope on God Is Founded (Evangelical Lutheran Worship 757).*

[My Faith Looks Up to Thee](#)

[Be Thou My Vision](#)

*Then conclude with these prayers:*

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

O Word of God incarnate, O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging, O Light in our dark sky,  
We praise you for the radiance that from the hallowed page,

A Lantern to our footsteps, shines on from age to age.

**Amen.** (ELW #514, stanza 1)

## Offering

Please remember to mail in your offerings so that Grace can continue to serve you.

## Offering Prayer

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the Heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **Amen.**

**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.**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

**Amen.**

Due to copyright restrictions, we are only able to provide hymns to download that are in the public domain. Other suggestions provided above may be found in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. To purchase a copy of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for the home, visit the [Augsburg Fortress website](#) or call 1-800-328-4648.

**Devotional Music Links:** For your individual or group devotion, you may choose to listen to the following choral recordings made available through Augsburg Fortress: "[The Plans I have for You](#);" "[God's Plan](#);" "[Be Thou My Vision](#)."

## Readings for the Week:

**Monday** Psalm 119:121-128. **Tuesday** (commemoration of Johann Sebastian Bach, died 1750; Heinrich Schütz, died 1672; George Frederick Handel, died 1759; musicians) 1 Kings 4:29-34. **Wednesday** (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus of Bethany; Olaf, King of Norway, martyr, died 1030) Proverbs 1:1-7, 20-33. **Thursday** Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21. **Friday** Isaiah 51:17-23. **Saturday** Isaiah 44:1-5. **Ninth Sunday after Pentecost** Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21.

**Daily Prayer Resources** are available, including simple forms of Morning, Evening, and Night Prayer; Responsive Prayer; and prayers for mealtimes and other occasions.

Reflection material: Gordon Lathrop. Intercessory Prayer: Gail Ramshaw

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Pastor's message – July 21, 2020

For many years I listened to "Garage Logic" on week-day afternoons over WNMT – 650 from Nashwauk-Hibbing. The program originated at KSTP – 1500 in St. Paul. Star of the show has been self-styled curmudgeon Joe Soucheray, who for decades has written a column in the St. Paul Sunday paper.

His July 19th column featured his assessment of the lawless situation in both the saintly capital city and Mill Town, just to the west. I carved out of the column the pertinent part that applies to us all. We in the Church have what the world needs – if only more people understood that. We have the love of God through Jesus Christ. That will sustain us in good times and bad. Now here 'tis, Joe's thought-provoking message:

"Lawless people...in the home."

Lawless people are shooting up the towns. That isn't the fault of the police. Lawless people are assaulting innocents in public places and on public transportation. That isn't the fault of the police. Boys as young as 12, maybe younger; have guns and are using them to commit robberies. That is not the fault of the police. Gangs of youth are systematically pulling off car hijackings all over both cities. That is not the fault of the police.

Young criminals with no moral or ethical clarity are ruining Minneapolis, not the police department. The police department needs reform and that will get accomplished, but the police cannot be scapegoated to hide the real problem, miserable heartless behavior.

This is never addressed by elected officials. Never. Not once has a mayor or city council member wagged a finger at a kid arrested for a gun crime and demanded of that young person an accounting of his behavior. No, the gun gets blamed, or the police get blamed, or the young person is called a victim of racism and on and on and on.

Nonsense, that is the soft bigotry of low expectations. The decline of moral and ethical integrity is an American cultural problem that runs through the entire socioeconomic gamut, from the highest place in the land to the lowest. It cannot be wished away. The absence of moral and ethical integrity and simple respect for authority and respect of fellow citizens starts in the home.

Peace;

Pastor Bill Sass