

Service of Daily Prayer

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Athens Lutheran Church - Athens, TN - September 27, 2020

As We Gather

We always want to know why. The rulers of the people wanted to know why Jesus was saying what He said and doing what He did. But Jesus challenged them with His Word and with the prophetic voice of John the Baptist. Why did they not listen, and why did they not repent? Why do we not listen and repent? Jesus told a parable of two sons—one whose words were yes but his heart was no, and the other whose words were no but whose heart said yes. We are called to listen. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we shall be saved.

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

Invocation

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

Versicles

In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;
in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.
My mouth is filled with Your praise,
and with Your glory all the day.
O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare Your praise.
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.

Reading

Ezekiel 18:1–4, 25–32

¹The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? ³As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die. . . .

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? ²⁶When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. ²⁷Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does

what is just and right, he shall save his life. ²⁸Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ O house of Israel, are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?

³⁰“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live.”

The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of anyone, so turn to Him.

Reading

Philippians 2:1–4, 14–18

¹If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. . . .

¹⁴Do all things without grumbling or questioning, ¹⁵that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

Reading

Matthew 21:23–32

²³When [Jesus] entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I also will ask you one question, and if you tell me the answer, then I also will tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵The baptism of John, from where did it come? From heaven or from man?” And they discussed it among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

Which of the two did the will of his father?

Final Reading Response

LSB 238

- L** In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.
- C** But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

Apostles’ Creed

- C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Koine Worship Song - Now Thank We All Our God

Sermon

Rev. Don Coulter

Time of Prayer

Lord’s Prayer

- P** Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- C** 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.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, You exalted Your Son to the place of all honor and authority. Enlighten our minds by Your Holy Spirit that, confessing Jesus as Lord, we may be led into all truth; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

In the morning

Almighty God, merciful Father, who created and completed all things, on this day when the work of our calling begins anew, we implore You to create its beginning, direct its continuance, and bless its end, that our doings may be preserved from sin, our life sanctified, and our work this day be well pleasing to You; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Luther's Morning Prayer

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Benedicamus

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Benediction

Then go joyfully to your work.

Stewardship Sentence

September 27 – Proper 21

Matthew 21:26 – *“But if we say, ‘From man,’ we are afraid of the crowd ...”*

Foolish Pharisees! They fear men more than they fear God, and so they miss out on the great blessing of knowing Jesus and His love. All our sins are like this: we fear something more than we fear God. And how foolish that is! Just think of the blessings we miss out on whenever we place our fear or trust in something other than God.

Lectionary Summary for Next Week - October 4, 2020

Isaiah 5:1–7; Philippians 3:4b–14; Matthew 21:33–46

The True Vine Redeems the Vineyard of the Lord of Hosts

“The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel” (Is. 5:7), which He planted “on a very fertile hill” (Is. 5:1). He did everything for His vineyard, not only clearing it of stones and planting it with “choice vines,” but also building the “watchtower” of His prophets and hewing out the “wine vat” of His priesthood in its midst (Is. 5:2). But when “he looked for it to yield grapes,” there were only “wild grapes” of bloodshed and unrighteousness (Is. 5:2, 7). The Lord Jesus likewise described the unfaithfulness of those who were called to care for His vineyard (Matt. 21:33–35). But in this He also describes His cross and Passion (Matt. 21:38–39), by which He has redeemed the vineyard for Himself. He is the true Vine, planted by death into the ground, and in His resurrection He brings forth “the fruits in their seasons” (Matt. 21:41). Among those good grapes of the true Vine is the apostle Paul. Once a zealous persecutor of the Church, he “suffered the loss of all things” in order to “gain Christ and be found in him,” to “know him and the power of his resurrection” (Phil. 3:8–10).

Acknowledgments

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