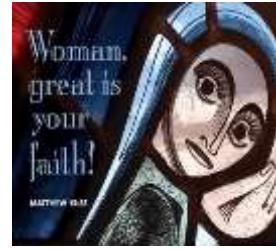


Faith Lutheran Church

Sunday, August 16, 2020
11th Sunday after Pentecost



Call to Worship

We gather together in the name of the Father, and of the Son+, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

- P) God, show Your faithfulness to us,
C) bless us, and make Your face smile upon us!
P) For then the whole earth will acknowledge Your ways,
C) and all the nations of the earth will know of Your power to save.
P) May all the nations praise You, O God;
C) may all the nations praise You!
P) Let us worship God.

Call to Confession

Friends, we are beloved and broken at the same time. Let us confess to God and one another the sins that have kept us apart.

Prayer of Confession (*please join in confessing our sins*)

Sojourning God, we pray for Your companionship to be made known to us, in times of ease and times of struggle. Help us to hear the calls of the oppressed and the poor. Guide us to live in ways that do not put our wants above the needs of others. Call us to heed the challenge of the prophets, to step out in faith and put our neighbor's needs as important as our own. Forgive our sins, in the name of Christ, who loves us even when we try to walk away, even when we think the sacrifice is too great, and gives us renewed hope. Amen.

Declaration of Forgiveness

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ, God has heard our plea for forgiveness and has met us with mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and freed. **Alleluia! Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Please join me in prayer:

God of all peoples, your arms reach out to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that Your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- **Isaiah 56:1, 6-8** *A house of prayer for all peoples*
- **Psalm 67** *Let all the peoples praise you, O God. (Ps. 67:3)*
- **Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32** *God's mercy to all, Jew and Gentile*

(1)

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew 15:10-28

Jesus teaches His disciples that true purity is a matter of the heart rather than outward religious observances. Almost immediately, this teaching is tested when a woman considered to be a religious outsider approaches Him for help.

[¹⁰]Jesus] called the crowd to Him and said to them, “Listen and understand:¹¹it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.”¹²Then the disciples approached and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what You said?”¹³He answered, “Every plant that My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.”¹⁵But Peter said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”¹⁶Then He said, “Are you also still without understanding?¹⁷Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles.¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander.²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.”]

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon.²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.”²³But He did not answer her at all. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.”²⁴He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”²⁵But she came and knelt before Him, saying, “Lord, help me.”²⁶He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”²⁷She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Be prepared. This sermon will be one of those which will ask more questions than will provide answers.

In our gospel reading from last Sunday from Matthew 14, Jesus had sent the disciples out into a boat on the other side of the sea of Galilee and a great wind came up. Jesus came walking toward them on the water but they were terrified believing they were seeing a ghost. When Jesus called to them, Peter said, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.” Jesus said to him, “Come.” Confident at first given his Lord’s beckoning, Peter soon remembers the height of the waves and depth of the sea and loses heart. Scared, he called out to Jesus who immediately reached out His hand and caught Peter, saying, “You of *little faith*, why did you doubt?”

In today’s gospel reading from Matthew 15, a Canaanite woman saw Jesus when He was in the district of Tyre and Sidon. She shouted out to Him, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” Initially, Jesus paid no attention to her and the disciples urged Him to send

her away. She was persistent, though, finally getting on her knees and begging Jesus, “Lord, help me.”

And then we have this brief conversation where Jesus uses metaphors to describe that His priority in His ministry on earth was to bring God's chosen ones to repentance. “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs,” Jesus said. Determined to get a response, the woman said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”

Jesus says to her, “Woman, *great* is your *faith!* Let it be done for you as you wish,” and grants her daughter healing immediately.

So here comes my series of questions; some things for you to ponder:

Why did Jesus say Peter had “little faith” and the Canaanite woman “great” faith? Do you think it might have anything to do with Peter *doubting* he could walk on water toward Jesus and the woman *trusting* that Jesus could heal her daughter and her *persistence*?

If I am more persistent – though I’m not quite sure what I should be persistent about – will my faith be greater? The woman begs Jesus for help and He initially ignores her. Yet, her *persistence* pays off and He finally heals her daughter. Is her faith great because she gets Jesus to change His mind? She recognized Jesus for who Jesus is immediately and, yet, it wasn’t until after Jesus calmed the storm that the disciples worshiped Him. Does timing make a difference?

Do you think the fact that the woman wouldn’t let any barrier stand in her way for her daughter’s cure had anything to do with Jesus saying she had *great* faith?

How do we recognize what is *little* faith or *great* faith? What are the criteria? Is it God who decides if our faith is little or great? Or do we get to decide? Or does our family or our pastor decide if we have little faith or great faith? I don’t want to answer that question for you!

If you’re deemed to have “little faith”, is there a way to you make it greater? Whatever greater may be? Sure, we can read the Bible more. We can pray more. We can help people more because that is what we are called to do; not that we must do good works for salvation.

How many times have you or someone been in a difficult situation and you have been told to just have faith? Have faith and everything will turn out ok. Does that mean you didn’t have faith to begin with? Or that it was *little* faith?

How can faith be measured? If things are going well for us, does that mean we have *great* faith? And if things aren’t going well for us, does that mean we have *little* faith?

Have I asked enough questions yet?

So here are some final questions. Think about your faith. How would you describe it? Little? Great? Somewhere in between? What did you measure it with? Are you satisfied with the level of your faith?

I am reminded of my favorite Bible verse, Ephesians 2:8-9, which says, “For by grace you have been

saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” It doesn’t say you have been saved through great faith or little faith. “For by grace you have been saved through faith...” And it is by nothing that you have done. Whether you doubt like Peter; whether you trust and are persistent like the Canaanite woman.

Your faith is enough, not because of what you do, but because of who you are and whose you are.
Blessed be God! Amen.

Blessing

And now, may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen. (*Philippians 4:7*)

Prayers of Intercession

Confident of Your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

Lord, You gather the church to be part of Your mission as ambassadors of Jesus Christ. As Jesus acknowledged the great faith of a woman from outside His people, help Your church discover and find blessing in the faith of people we might reject.

You have blessed us with the bounty of the earth. Grant Your grace to all Your creatures, that the earth will flourish. Relieve waters choked by garbage, renew soils stripped of nutrients, and refresh the air all creatures need to live.

You call the nations to be glad and sing for joy. Let Your way be known among all the nations of the world, now divided by competing interests, contending alliances, and consumed by enormous worry. Bless us and make your face shine upon all.

You show unexpected mercy, kindness, and generosity. We pray for those who do not have enough, for outcasts in our villages, cities, and town, and for those who need Your healing. We especially pray for the family and friends who have walked on from or been infected with the coronavirus. We pray for all whose lives have been disrupted by this deadly disease. We pray for those suffering in any way, lifting them up in our hearts, our minds, and with our voices at this time....(please name your prayer concerns).

In You we live and move and have our being. Grant our congregations grace to find our life refreshed in You. Accompany us in the rhythms of late summer. Give us rest and renewal, and strengthen us for mission in Your name.

Your eternal promises are more than we could ever imagine. As you gather all the saints, join us also with them on the great day of Your salvation.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from Your love, we offer these prayers to You; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Our Lord’s Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

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**

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

Forgiving God, people give for so many reasons – joy, guilt, obligation, gratitude, obedience, hope, control, thankfulness. Remind us of Your call to examine everything that we have; after all, our money and possessions are really gifts from You. You call us to use them wisely – to share them openly – to give them generously. So, thank You for this celebration of giving. Receive this offering and release us from the foolish temptation to believe that it is best spent on ourselves. Amen.

Benediction

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord look upon you with favor and grant you peace; in the name of God the Father, God the Son+, and God the Spirit that makes us one. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you!

Thanks be to God!

Sources:

www.presbyterianmission.org

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<http://www.stephenmfearing.com/liturgy//7th-sunday-after-pentecost-proper-9-year-b-e6a6r-fk68b-2hdmk-23fkl?rq=proper%2013>

<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/search/label/Proper%2015%20A>