

THE
LABORERS
IN THE
VINEYARD

Sunday, September 23, 2023
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Service Theme
A STORY OF PERPLEXING GENEROSITY

Give a single bag of M&Ms to two four-year-olds and tell them to share. You will witness counting done with accountant-like precision. Each child will get an equal amount of candy because that is fair. Human beings have an incredibly strong sense of fairness. That is why it can be so perplexing when we see how God dispenses blessing and grace. We see people who mock God who are more prosperous than believers. We see people who convert on their deathbeds, and Scripture tells us they obtain the same salvation as someone who has been Christian all his life. How is that fair? Through a simple story, Jesus teaches us a profound truth. We need to stop expecting God to be fair. God is not fair. He does not give us what we deserve, and that's called mercy. In fact, he gives us what we don't deserve, and that's called grace. No, God is not fair. He is breathtakingly generous.

Order of Service
Morning Praise (CW p. 45)



1 Fa - ther, we praise you, now the night is o - ver, Ac - tive and
2 Mon - arch of all things, fit us for your man - sions; Ban - ish our
3 All - ho - ly Fa - ther, Son, and e - qual Spir - it, Trin - i - ty



watch - ful, stand - ing now be - fore you. Sing - ing, we of - fer
weak - ness, health and whole - ness send - ing. Bring us to heav - en,
bless - ed, send us your sal - va - tion. Yours is the glo - ry,



prayer and med - i - ta - tion; Thus we a - dore you.
where your saints u - nit - ed Joy with - out end - ing.
gleam - ing and re - sound - ing Through all cre - a - tion.



M: O Lord, o - pen my lips.



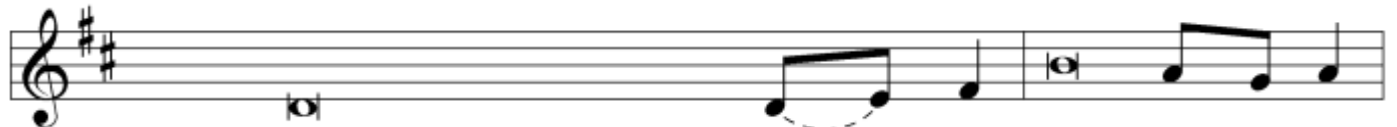
C: And my mouth shall de - clare your praise.



M: Has - ten to save me, O God.



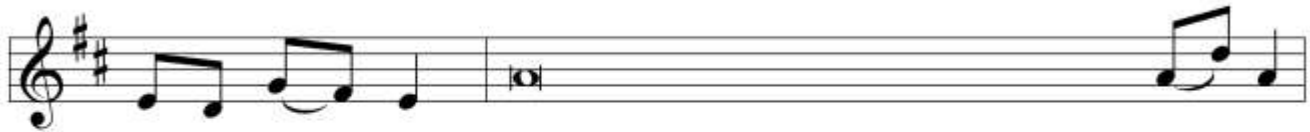
C: O Lord, come quick - ly to help me.



(General) Praise be to God, the Father,
the Son, and the Holy — Spir - it: let us wor - ship him.



C: Oh, come, let us sing to the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of



our sal - va - tion. Let us come into his presence with thanks-giv - ing,



let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. For the Lord is a



great God and a great king a-bove all gods. The deep places of the earth are



in his hand; the heights of the hills are al - so his. The sea is his, for he



made it, and his hand formed the dry land. Oh, come, let us worship and



bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our mak - er. For he is our God,



and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

Old Testament

Jonah 3:10-4:11 (EHV)

Jonah is perplexed by the generous forgiveness God showed to the people of Nineveh.

¹⁰When God saw their actions, that they had turned from their evil way, God relented from the disaster which he said he would bring on them, and he did not carry it out.

But to Jonah all this seemed very bad, and he became very angry. ²He prayed to the LORD, “LORD, wasn’t this exactly what I said when I was still in my own country? That is why I previously fled to Tarshish, because I knew that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abounding in mercy, and you relent from sending disaster. ³So now, LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴But the LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

⁵Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city. He made a shelter for himself there and sat in the shade under it, waiting to see what would happen in the city.

⁶Then the LORD God provided a plant and made it grow up over Jonah to provide shade over his head, to relieve him from his discomfort. So Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, and it attacked the plant so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, so he said, “It is better for me to die than to live.”

⁹But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” Jonah said, “I do have a right to be angry—angry enough to die!”

¹⁰So the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant. You did not work for it or make it grow. It grew up in one night and perished after one night. ¹¹So should I not be concerned for Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know the difference between their right hand and their left—and also many animals?”

Psalm 115

Refrain



Not un - to us, O Lord, but to your name be the glo - ry.

Psalm Tone



Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.

Why do the nations say, “Where is their God?”

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

The LORD remembers us and will bless us:

He will bless the house of Israel,
he will bless those who fear the LORD—
small and great alike.

Refrain

May the LORD make you increase,
both you and your children.

May you be blessed by the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

The highest heavens belong to the LORD,
but the earth he has given to man.

It is not the dead who praise the LORD,
it is we who extol the LORD, both now and forevermore.

**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.**

Refrain

Epistle

Romans 9:6-16 (EHV)

God is perplexingly generous. He shows mercy and grace to those he chooses, regardless of any merit or worth.

⁶This does not mean that God's word has failed, because not all who are descended from Israel are really Israel, ⁷and not all who are descended from Abraham are really his children. On the contrary, "Your line of descent will be traced through Isaac." ⁸This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are counted as his descendants. ⁹For this is what the promise said: "I will arrive at this set time, and Sarah will have a son."

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah also had children by one man, our forefather, Isaac. ¹¹Even before the twins were born or did anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might continue—¹²not by works but because of him who calls us—it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." ¹³Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

¹⁴What will we say then? Does this mean that God is unjust? Absolutely not!

¹⁵For God says to Moses:

I will show mercy to whom I show mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.

¹⁶So then, it does not depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. Alleluia. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Alleluia. (Ephesians 2:8)

Gospel

Matthew 19:30 – 20:16 (EHV)

Jesus tells us a story of God's perplexing generosity.

³⁰Many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.”

“Indeed the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing to pay the workers a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³He also went out about the third hour and saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace. ⁴To these he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour and did the same thing. ⁶When he went out about the eleventh hour, he found others standing unemployed. He said to them, ‘Why have you stood here all day unemployed?’

⁷“They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’

“He told them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸When it was evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last group and ending with the first.’

⁹“When those who were hired around the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. ¹⁰When those who were hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But they each received a denarius too. ¹¹After they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner: ¹²‘Those who were last worked one hour, and you made them equal to us who have endured the burden of the day and the scorching heat!’

¹³“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not make an agreement with me for a denarius? ¹⁴Take what is yours and go. I want to give to the last one hired the same as I also gave to you. ¹⁵Can’t I do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶In the same way, the last will be first, and the first, last.”

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, you call us to work in your kingdom and promise to reward us according to your grace. Help us to rid our minds of worldly expectations and rejoice that you freely pour out the blessings of salvation to all people; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come By God's free grace
 2 What God does in his law de - mand And none to him
 3 It is a false, mis - lead - ing dream That God his law
 4 Yet as the law must be ful - filled Or we must die
 5 Since Christ has full a - tone - ment made And brought to us



and fa - vor. Good works can - not a - vert our doom;
 can ren - der Brings wrath and woe on ev - 'ry hand
 has giv - en That sin - ners can them - selves re - deem
 de - spair - ing, Christ came and has God's an - ger stilled,
 sal - va - tion, Each Chris - tian there - fore may be glad



They help and save us nev - er. Faith looks to
 For man, the vile of - fend - er. Our flesh has
 And by their works gain heav - en. The law is
 Our hu - man na - ture shar - ing. He has for
 And build on this foun - da - tion. Your grace a -



Je - sus Christ a - lone, Who did for all the
 not those pure de - sires The spir - it of the
 but a mir - ror bright To bring the in - bred
 us the law o - beyed And thus the Fa - ther's
 lone, dear Lord, I plead; Your death is now my



world a - tone; He is the one Re - deem - er.
 law re - quires, And lost is our con - di - tion.
 sin to light That lurks with - in our na - ture.
 venge - ance stayed Which o - ver us im - pend - ed.
 life in - deed, For you have paid my ran - som.

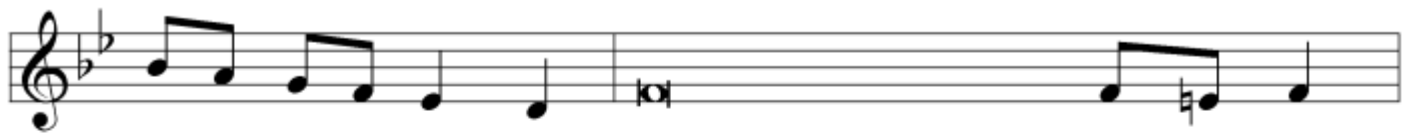
Sermon Text & Theme

Matthew 19:30 - 20:16. . . God's call to discipleship...

- 1) Attracts two kinds of workers,
- 2) Who view his grace in two different ways.



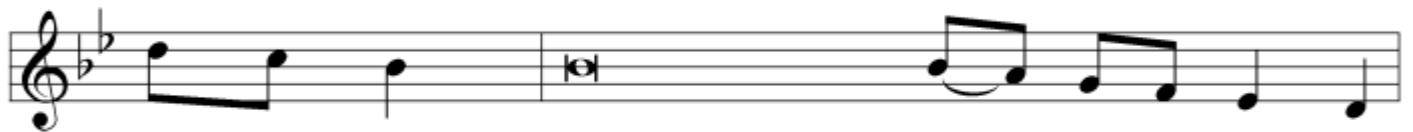
C: We praise you, O God, we acclaim you as Lord; all creation worships you,



Fa-ther ev - er - last - ing. To you all angels, all the pow'rs of heav'n,



cherubim and seraphim, sing in end-less praise: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of



heav'n - ly hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry.



The glorious company of apostles praise you. The noble fellowship of



proph - ets praise you. The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.



Throughout the world the ho - ly Church ac - claims you:



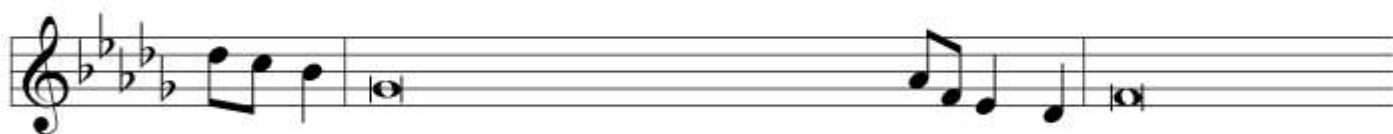
Father of majesty unbounded, your glorious, true, and on - ly Son,



and the Holy Spirit, ad - vo - cate and guide. You, Christ, are the King of



glo - ry, the eternal Son of the Fa - ther. When you became man to



set us free, you humbled yourself to be born of a vir - gin. You overcame the



sting of death and opened the kingdom of heaven to all be - liev - ers.



You sit at the right hand of God in the glory of the Fa - ther.



We believe that you will come to be our judge.



Come then, Lord, and help your peo - ple, bought with the price of



your own blood, and bring us with your saints to glory ev - er - last - ing.

Offertory Prayer

Lord, Have Mercy



M: In the morning, O Lord, I call to you; be merciful to me and hear my prayer.



C: Lord, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord's Prayer

C: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Prayer for Love and Faith

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for reconciling us to yourself through the sufferings and death of your dear Son. Through him we have confidence to enter into your presence and to bring you our prayers and petitions.

Out of the infinite bounty of your goodness, grant us a rich measure of your Spirit. Let the love of Christ fill your Church, so that it may flourish in all good works. Help us show love and compassion for all who are in need. Bestow on the nations of the earth the knowledge of your mercy, that they may turn to you, the only God, and find salvation in you.

Strengthen our faith so that we unfailingly come to you in prayer for all our bodily needs. Give a special measure of your power to those who are sorrowful or mourning, to those who are in pain or sickness, to those who may be in temptation or peril, that they may receive your blessed aid. And help us patiently endure any chastening and afflictions you permit to come into our lives, knowing that you are using them in love to prepare us for that joyful communion with you, which is ours for all eternity.

Accept our prayers and intercessions, and provide for all our needs not because we are worthy but for the sake of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

Prayer for Grace

M: O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, you have brought us safely to this new day. Defend us with your mighty power, and grant that this day we neither fall into sin nor run into any kind of danger; and in all we do, direct us to what is right in your sight, through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.



M: Let us praise the Lord.



C: Thanks be to God.

Blessing



M: The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the fellowship of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C: A - men.

Hymn

CW 390:6 Salvation unto Us Has Come

**All blessing, honor, thanks, and praise To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by his grace—All glory to his merit!
O Triune God in heav'n above, You have revealed your saving love;
Your blessed name be hallowed!**

Announcements

Church Cleaners:

October 1 – Luke // October 8 – Timothy

DIVINE WORD'S TWO WEEK CALENDAR

Su (24)	9:00 am 10:30 am 11:30 am 11:45 pm	Sunday School and Bible Class Worship Coffee Hour Voters' Meeting
We (27)	6:30 pm	"Test the Spirit's" Bible Information Class.
Th (28)	6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Illuminé (at St. Paul's) Youth Confirmation (W)
Fr (29)	4:30 pm	Youth Confirmation (D)
Su (1)	9:00 am 10:30 am 11:30 am 3:00 pm	Sunday School and Bible Class Worship & Communion First Fellowship Worship and Communion in Poltimore
We (4)	6:30 pm	"Test the Spirit's" Bible Information Class.
Th (5)	10:30 am 6:00 pm 6:30 pm	Devotion at Longfield Manor Illuminé (at St. Paul's) Youth Confirmation (W)
Fr (6)	4:30 pm	Youth Confirmation (D)
Su (8)	9:00 am 10:30 am 11:30 am	Sunday School and Bible Class Thanksgiving Worship Coffee Hour



Divine Word

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