

22nd Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday, October 20, 2024

Introduction to the day

Today's gospel starts with disciples obsessing over who will be closest to Jesus, leading to Jesus teaching his followers about God's take on importance and power. Here Jesus makes it explicit that the reversal of values in God's community is a direct challenge to the values of the dominant culture, where wielding power over others is what makes you great. When we pray "your kingdom come" we are praying for an end to tyranny and oppression. We pray this gathered around the cross, a sign of great shame transformed to be the sign of great honor and service.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 102)

Let us pray.

Sovereign God, you turn your greatness into goodness for all the peoples on earth. Shape us into willing servants of your kingdom, and make us desire always and only your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Job 38:1-7 [34-41]

A reading from Job.

At the end of the book of Job, after Job and his companions have argued about the cause of the great suffering Job endures, God finally speaks. These verses begin that speech, which is a grand vision of creation, describing God's ordering of the cosmos and inviting Job to marvel at its beauty.

PSALM: Psalm 104:1-9, 24, 35b

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all. (*Ps. 104:24*)

SECOND READING: Hebrews 5:1-10

A reading from Hebrews.

Using imagery from scripture and from Jewish worship practices, Jesus is presented as the great high priest who was obedient to God's saving plan. Through his suffering and death he has become the source of eternal salvation.

GOSPEL: Mark 10:35-45

On the way to Jerusalem the disciples ask Jesus to grant them seats of honor. Jesus responds by announcing that he and his followers will "rule" through self-giving service.

GOSPEL MESSAGE - Savior from Scratch

Have you ever made something from scratch—a cake, a meal, a table? There is something special about the words "I baked this cake from scratch" or "It's a family recipe" or "This is a hand-crafted solid-oak table." You could have bought the cake from the store, ordered the same meal for delivery, or bought a table from a manufacturer, but you chose to give of your time and effort to make it yourself.

God made a savior from scratch. God could have popped into Jerusalem and declared, "Everyone is saved!" Or even had a full-grown man formed out of the dust ride into Jerusalem and get crucified. The gospels would be a lot shorter if this were how God worked. All those chapters and details about God's Son that come before the Holy Week accounts are there to tell us something important about God and what God wants us to learn from Jesus: relationships.

In today's gospel reading, you can almost see Jesus rolling his eyes over the disciples' lack of understanding. James and John are acting like teenagers in a school cafeteria, trying to reserve themselves the best seats next to the coolest kid.

But Jesus says to them, "You do not know what you are asking." Jesus shares with them the key to being his followers: it's not about being first, coolest, or at the top of the hierarchy; it's about serving. Once again, Jesus points us to relationships.

The cake is special because it was crafted carefully with love for someone special. The meal is so delicious because it was cooked with a family recipe passed down from generation to generation through relationships. Jesus is who he is because he built relationships with the disciples and those he met along the way. He sat with the woman at the well, held little children, and went fishing with his friends. Loving relationships that led him to the cross to make salvation from scratch.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Challenged by God's Word in Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and the whole creation.

Holy One, we give thanks for all servant leaders of the church. Bless bishops, pastors, and deacons with humble wisdom and ground them in your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Creative One, we give thanks for the delicate balance of the natural world. Kindle in us a spirit of caring strength in the preservation of habitats, food availability, and centers of refuge, that all wildlife may thrive. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Empowering One, fill the leaders of governments with a spirit of service that prioritizes those on the margins due to job loss, underemployment, unsafe working conditions, and immigration status. May economic equity be achieved for all people. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Restoring One, send your angels to watch over, rescue, and protect those who are injured or ill. Nurse those who suffer hardship, disease, injury, or difficulty with your comfort and peace. We especially pray for Linda Boland, Ken Fulford, Sandra Gagnon, Shirley Glickman, Walter Hobden, Donna L. Hoffman, Bill Lorbetskie, Glenda Panke, Marilyn Schneider, Danny Schultz, Doug Sell, Debbie Thom, Keith Weckwerth, Denita Wolfram, Elaine Yourth, Harold Yourth, Stephanie Yourth, and those in long term care facilities and senior residences.

In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts, those who need your healing touch. (pause) God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding One, you call pastors to shepherd the congregation toward faithful living as servants and followers of Jesus. Inspire all ordained ministers and seminarians to ministry that challenges, engages, and comforts those in their care. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Saving One, we give thanks for the disciples James and John and all saints who have faithfully served you. We rejoice in a promised place at the feast of victory that we receive by your grace alone. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in the saving grace you freely give, both now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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