

THE POWER OF PARABLES

THE PARABLE OF THE
WORKERS
IN THE
VINEYARD



PERPLEXING GENEROSITY

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost: September 24, 2023



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

God's Word for this week

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 convert on their deathbed, 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.

Before Worship

Take time for prayer and to review the lessons and the service notes. For personal preparation for Communion, see Red Hymnal: p.156.

General Information

The restrooms are located in the fellowship hall. Visitors – welcome, and please take a moment and sign the guestbook in the fellowship hall. If you need special assistance for communion, please notify an usher and/or the pastor.

Serving in Worship

Music: Rachel Halldorson
Ushers: Josiah Kroll, Art Kutschied
Pastor: Wayne Halldorson
Pastor's Cell: 903-717-1922
Pastor's Email: grace.tx.pastor@gmail.com

Church Information

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Facebook: facebook.com/graceneearthelake1
Prayer Requests: prayers.grace.wels@gmail.com / text to 520-236-9673

T-Loop Hearing Assistance

If you have a hearing aid with a T-coil, you can connect it to the T-Loop device installed throughout the church building. Headsets are available for anyone needing hearing assistance. Personal earbuds can also be used with a head set. See Kris Martinson if you need assistance.



SERVICE OF WORD & SACRAMENT

576 Amazing Grace

CW 576



1 A - maz - ing grace— how sweet the sound— that
2 The Lord has prom - ised good to me, his
3 Through man - y dan - gers, toils, and snares I
4 When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved a wretch like me! I once was lost but
Word my hope se - cures; he will my shield and
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found, was blind but now I see.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

Text (sts. 1–3): John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.; (st. 4): A Collection of Sacred Ballads, Richmond, 1790
Tune: Columbian Harmony, Cincinnati, 1829, ed. Benjamin Shaw; ed. Charles H. Spilman
Text and tune: Public domain

Opening Blessing

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ✠ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Confession & Absolution

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask Him to forgive us:

**Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful,
and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions.**

I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good.

For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity.

**But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus
Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). The first staff begins with a common time signature 'C' in a box. The lyrics are: Lord, have mer - cy on us. Christ, have mer - cy on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us. A - men. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence on the second staff.

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

1005 Gloria (Amer) - HOLY MANNA

CW 1005

Tune: HOLY MANNA

1 Glo - ry be to God in heav - en, peace to those he
2 On - ly Son of God the Fa - ther, Lamb who takes our
loves so well. On the earth let all his peo - ple
sin a - way, now with him in tri - umph seat - ed—
speak his grace, his won - ders tell: Lord, we praise you for your
for your mer - cy, Lord, we pray: Je - sus Christ, most high and
glo - ry, might - y Fa - ther, heav - en's King; hear our joy - ful
ho - ly, Sav - ior, you are God a - lone in the glo - ry
ad - o - ra - tion and ac - cept the thanks we bring.
of the Fa - ther with the Spir - it, Three in One!

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

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.**

THE WORD

First Reading

Jonah 3:10—4:11

¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

¹But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD, “Isn’t this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

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

⁵Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”

⁹But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

¹⁰But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left?”

33B Rejoice, You Righteous, in the LORD

Psalm 33B



1 Re - joice, you right-eous, in the LORD, in song your
2 Let ev - 'ry na - tion, ev - 'ry land u - nite with
3 Be - hold, God's ev - er - watch - ful eye sees through our



voic - es raise; a - wake the psal - ter - y and harp, lift
one ac - cord and hum - bly lay their heart - felt prayers in
dark de - spair; the arms of grace en - cir - cle us with



up God's name in praise! For by God's word the
awe be - fore the LORD. How hap - py are God's
strong, yet ten - der care; the hope of all the



heav'ns were hung; God laid the sea and land, and all that
faith - ful ones, how blest God's cho - sen heirs, for sure - ly
a - ges past, that sets at peace our fears, God's mer - cy



fills the fir - ma - ment was made at God's com - mand.
an in - her - it - ance of glo - ry shall be theirs!
and God's stead - fast love shall fol - low all our years.

Second Reading

Romans 9:6–16

⁶It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." ⁸In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is

the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.
⁹For this was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

¹⁰Not only that, but Rebekah’s children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. ¹¹Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God’s purpose in election might stand: ¹²not by works but by him who calls—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” ¹³Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.”

¹⁴What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! ¹⁵For he says to Moses,

“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

¹⁶It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.

Gospel Acclamation

Ephesians 2:8

**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.**



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



Faith comes from hear - ing the mes - sage, and the



mes - sage is heard through the Word of Christ. Al - le -



lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

¹“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. ²He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

³About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. ⁴He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ ⁵So they went.

He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. ⁶About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’

⁷‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

“He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’

⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’

⁹The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. ¹⁰So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. ¹¹When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. ¹²‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work and the heat of the day.’

¹³But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius?’ ¹⁴Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. ¹⁵Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come by God's free grace and
 6 Since Christ has full a - tone-ment made and brought to us sal -
 8 The law re - veals the guilt of sin and makes us con-science-
 9 Faith clings to Je - sus' cross a - lone and rests in him un -
 10 All bless-ing, hon - or, thanks, and praise to Fa - ther, Son, and



fa - vor; good works can - not a - vert our doom, they help and
 va - tion, each Chris-tian there - fore may be glad and build on
 strick-en; but then the gos - pel en - ters in the sin - ful
 ceas - ing; and by its fruits true faith is known, with love and
 Spir - it, the God who saved us by his grace; all glo - ry



save us nev - er. Faith looks to Je - sus Christ a - lone, who
 this foun - da - tion. Your grace a - lone, dear Lord, I plead, your
 soul to quick - en. Come to the cross, trust Christ, and live; the
 hope in - creas - ing. For faith a - lone can jus - ti - fy; works
 to his mer - it! O tri - une God in heav'n a - bove, you



did for all the world a - tone; he is our one Re - deem - er.
 death is now my life in - deed, for you have paid my ran - som.
 law no peace can ev - er give, no com - fort and no bless-ing.
 serve our neigh-bor and sup - ply the proof that faith is liv - ing.
 have re-vealed your sav - ing love; your bless-ed name be hal - lowed!

Text: tr. The Lutheran Hymnal, 1941, alt.; Paul Speratus, 1484–1551, abr., alt.
 Tune: Etlich Cristlich liden, Wittenberg, 1524
 Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Matthew 20:8-16 “Expectation Recalibration”

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.

Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.

Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.

Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.

Restore our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.

Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.

Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity.

Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death, or death of a loved one, draws near.

Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.

Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.

Amen.

Offering

THE SACRAMENT

Preface

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

1010 Sanctus (Amer) - MISSIONARY HYMN

CW 1010

Tune: MISSIONARY HYMN



1 Sing, "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of hosts on high,
2 Ho - san - na in the high - est! How blest is Christ our King,



your ev - er - last - ing glo - ry fills earth and sea and sky."
who died as our Re - deem - er, e - ter - nal life to bring!



Our voic - es cry, "Ho - san - na!" Lord, hear our hum - ble plea:
How blest are you, Lord Je - sus, now com - ing in God's name!



in mer - cy, come and save us; in love, come set us free.
"Ho - san - na in the high - est!" our grate - ful hearts pro - claim.

Text: Michael D. Schultz

Tune: Lowell Mason

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Tune: Public domain

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give thanks to you, O God, through your dear Son, Jesus Christ, whom you sent to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and the messenger of your grace. Through him you made all things; in him you are well pleased. He is the incarnate Word, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. To fulfill your promises, he stretched out his hands on the cross and released from eternal death all who believe in you.

Through him, we glorify and honor you, O God our Father, with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Words of Institution

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my † body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my † blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

1013 Agnus (Amer) - HAMBURG

CW 1013

Tune: HAMBURG



1 O Lamb of God, once lift - ed high up - on a
2 O Lamb of God, your sac - ri - fice has can-celled



cross to bleed and die, in per-fect love you
sin, has paid its price; your per-fect love will



took our place— be - stow on us your sav - ing grace.
nev - er cease— have mer - cy, Lord, and grant us peace.

Text: Michael D. Schultz

Tune: Lowell Mason

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Distribution

Grace Lutheran Church follows the practice of close communion. This means that all our members are in agreement with the teachings of our church body. We welcome members of our church synod, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod to partake of the Lord's Supper with us today. We respectfully and lovingly ask that other visitors speak with our pastor after the service if there are any questions about this practice.

Closing Prayers

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

Amen.

878 Christ Alone the World's Redeemer

CW 878 sts. 1-3



1 Christ a - lone the world's Re - deem - er, Christ, God's own be -
2 Word a - lone, in - spired and ho - ly, Word re - veal - ing
3 Grace a - lone, and not our work - ing, brings sal - va - tion



got - ten Son, Christ, the sac - ri - fice for sin - ners,
Christ our Lord, liv - ing, ac - tive voice of Je - sus,
un - to all. Grace a - lone! Your gifts you give us



by his death sal - va - tion won. Christ a - lone our me - di -
sharp - er than a two - edged sword, Word to teach and to ad -
as we hear your gen - tle call. Un - i - mag - ined love - ex -



a - tor, Christ a - lone our great High Priest, in his right - eous -
mon - ish, Word to com - fort and to heal - God's own Word en -
chang - ing all our sin for right - eous - ness, grace on grace thro'



ness he clothes us. Christ a - lone is our true peace.
dures for - ev - er all his coun - sel to re - veal.
Christ re - ceiv - ing, clothed in his own ho - li - ness.

Text: Steven P. Mueller, b. 1964

Tune: Oude en Nieuwe Hollandse . . . Contradanseu, Amsterdam, c. 1710

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Tune: Public domain

Acknowledgments

Setting Six (American) from Christian Worship

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grace Treasurer

The nominating committee is asking for your help to find a new treasurer (or a couple) to fill this vital role at Grace for 2024.

Church Cleaners

Grace is looking for more volunteers to get on the church cleaning rotation. If you're interested please speak to Vicki Crawford.

Bible Classes

Our Genesis class on Wednesday at 3 pm is going again – even if you haven't been attending this class regularly, now is a great time to jump in!

On Sunday mornings we've started a new series entitled: *Cruisin' through Corinthians*. We hope everyone can attend as we work through these amazing books of the Bible.

On Friday of this week we study Parables at 10:30 am (here at Grace) before the lunch out – ladies are going to Steve-o's in Mt. Vernon. The men will choose a place in Mt. Vernon too. Bring a friend!

Bible Uncorked

Thanks to everyone who participated in this great outreach event – please keep the fruits of our evangelism in your prayers!

Upcoming Schedule

Today	9 / 10 am	Bible Class / Worship + Communion
Sept. 27	3:00 pm	Genesis Bible Class
Sept. 29	10:30 am	Parables Bible Class
Sept. 29	11:30 am	Men's / Women's Lunch Out
Oct. 14	4:00 pm	Oktoberfest at Camp Shiloh

A Look at our Church Library

Have you ever checked out a book from our church library? Grace offers books to take home and read available to members and friends of Grace. You are invited to pick one out for yourself! Maybe you're looking for a devotional book or perhaps you're interested in a certain subject on a deeper level. You might enjoy something to supplement what you're already doing at home. You can even find information on other religions highlighting what others believe and how that compares to what Scripture says. All the books available in the Grace library are carefully vetted and written by trusted authors and pastors that mirror what we teach here at Grace. New books continue to be added to assist you in your personal spiritual growth. Check one out today!

Fall Recommendation: *People's Bible*

When you're at home reading the Bible, do you ever wish you had the pastor right there to explain something to you? You could have him on speed dial, but you more likely soon forget what you were wondering about and never get the explanation you were hoping for. Help is here! The library at Grace now has the complete People's Bible series for you to check out and take home. For instance, if you are reading through the book of Acts, you can check out the Acts People's Bible to read along with it! The People's Bible is a Bible commentary for everyone. Written by experienced pastors and professors who begin with the original Hebrew or Greek text, each easy-to-read volume helps Christians enrich their study of the Bible and points them to its central focus, Jesus Christ. (NPH) It's almost as good as having a pastor with you as you're reading! You can always bring your questions to Pastor Halldorson but for those times when he's not readily available, check out what the People's Bible has to say. It's a great way to grow in your understanding of Scripture at home!

Your church secretary, Rachel Halldorson