

## **Sunday, July 31, 2022 – Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

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### **Introduction**

Today's texts offer instruction and encouragement for all who are occasionally overwhelmed by the "unhappy business" of life. Jesus urges us to take care and be on guard against all kinds of greed. We who have died with Christ in holy baptism have also been raised with him and are encouraged to elevate our thinking, seeking the "things that are above." To that end we seek the sustenance of the Lord's supper and the encouragement of God's word.

### **Prayer of the Day**

Benevolent God, you are the source, the guide, and the goal of our lives. Teach us to love what is worth loving, to reject what is offensive to you, and to treasure what is precious in your sight, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: Hosea 11:1-11**

*Hosea compares God's love for Israel to the love parents have for their children. Whether teaching toddlers to walk or dealing with a child's rebellion, good parents continue to love their children as they try to lead them to life. In the same way, God's love will not let Israel go.*

<sup>1</sup>When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called my son.

<sup>2</sup>The more I called them,  
the more they went from me;  
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,  
and offering incense to idols.

<sup>3</sup>Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
I took them up in my arms;  
but they did not know that I healed them.

<sup>4</sup>I led them with cords of human kindness,  
with bands of love.

I was to them like those  
who lift infants to their cheeks.  
I bent down to them and fed them.

<sup>5</sup>They shall return to the land of Egypt,  
and Assyria shall be their king,  
because they have refused to return to me.

<sup>6</sup>The sword rages in their cities,

it consumes their oracle-priests,  
and devours because of their schemes.

<sup>7</sup>My people are bent on turning away from me.  
To the Most High they call,  
but he does not raise them up at all.

<sup>8</sup>How can I give you up, Ephraim?  
How can I hand you over, O Israel?  
How can I make you like Admah?  
How can I treat you like Zeboiim?  
My heart recoils within me;  
my compassion grows warm and tender.

<sup>9</sup>I will not execute my fierce anger;  
I will not again destroy Ephraim;  
for I am God and no mortal,  
the Holy One in your midst,  
and I will not come in wrath.

<sup>10</sup>They shall go after the LORD,  
who roars like a lion;  
when he roars,  
his children shall come trembling from the west.

<sup>11</sup>They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt,  
and like doves from the land of Assyria;  
and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD.

## **Psalm 107:1-9, 43**

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for the | LORD is good,  
for God's mercy en- | dures forever.

<sup>2</sup>**Let the redeemed of the | LORD proclaim  
that God redeemed them from the hand | of the foe,**

<sup>3</sup>gathering them in | from the lands;  
from the east and from the west, from the north and | from the south.

<sup>4</sup>**Some wandered in | desert wastes;  
they found no path to a city where | they might dwell.**

<sup>5</sup>They were hun- | gry and thirsty;  
their spirits lan- | guished within them.

<sup>6</sup>**Then in their trouble they cried | to the LORD,  
and you delivered them from | their distress.**

<sup>7</sup>You led them | on a straight path  
to go to a city where | they might dwell.

<sup>8</sup>**Let them give thanks to you, LORD, for your | steadfast love  
and your wonderful works | for all people.**

<sup>9</sup>For you satisfy the | thirsty soul  
and fill the hungry | with good things.

<sup>43</sup>**Whoever is wise will pon- | der these things,  
and consider well the LORD's | steadfast love.**

## **Second Reading: Colossians 3:1-11**

*Life in Christ includes a radical reorientation of our values. Just as the newly baptized shed their old clothes and put on new garments, so Christians are called to let go of greed and take hold of a life shaped by God's love in Christ.*

<sup>1</sup>So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, <sup>3</sup>for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup>These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. <sup>8</sup>But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup>In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

## **Gospel: Luke 12:13-21**

*In God's reign, the "rich will be sent away empty." Jesus uses a parable to warn against identifying the worth of one's life with the value of one's possessions rather than one's relationship with God.*

<sup>13</sup>Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus,] "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." <sup>14</sup>But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." <sup>16</sup>Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. <sup>17</sup>And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' <sup>18</sup>Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. <sup>19</sup>And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' <sup>20</sup>But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' <sup>21</sup>So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

## Prayers of Intercession

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer, saying "Merciful God" and responding, "receive our prayer."

*A brief silence.*

O God, you are wholeness. Where there is division in your church, bring reconciliation and healing. Guide the work of theologians, Sunday school teachers, seminary professors, and all who provide instruction for the building up of your church. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are the source of all life. Where creation cries out in distress, bring relief and renewal. Bless farmers, ranchers, distributors, and all who provide our food. Nourish the land and all its habitants. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are wisdom. Where nations and communities yearn for peace, bring justice. Strengthen those who toil for the welfare of others, especially military personnel, police, first responders, and activists, and for the healing of the nations. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are life. Where your people are overwhelmed with the busy-ness of life, bring encouragement. Accompany all who experience emotional, mental, or physical distress (*especially those who we name at this time, aloud or silently on our hearts...*). Renew us at your table of mercy. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are our treasure. Where scarcity and anxiety pervade your church, bring abundance and vitality. Guide the work of church councils and committees and give them clarity for the work of ministry in this place (*specific ministries may be named*). Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

O God, you are resurrection. We give you thanks for all your saints (*especially*). Inspire us by their example of faithful living to set our minds on things above and to be rich in love toward you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

**Amen.**

## ***A reflection for this Eighth Sunday after Pentecost...***

### Dying to be Rich

“All is vanity and a chasing after wind,” says Ecclesiastes [1:2, 12-14,; 2:18-23], yet we chase wealth like it will last forever, forgetting that we ourselves will one day die and that everything we have stored up here will be useless to us. Into the tragedy of our human drive to be rich in possessions, even at the cost of being poor in everything else, Jesus tells the parable of the rich fool. It is first told to brothers squabbling over an inheritance, and now it is told to us, some of us squabbling with our relatives or neighbours over wealth and possessions. The rich fool, despite his great wealth, is poor in every other way, eating alone, and even dying alone. In Jesus’ depiction of this fool our own sinful hearts are exposed. We too vainly chase after even more, sacrificing right relationship with God and neighbour in the process. Death comes to the rich fool when he least expects it, as it must come to all of us. How, then, are we to be “rich toward God”? Paul reminds the Colossian Christians of their own unexpected deaths in the waters of baptism: “you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” In baptism we are joined to Christ’s death, and we are to be dead to all foolish chasing after more possessions. We have died, not alone, but with Christ. Our lives now are hidden with Christ in God, and in Christ we share a fortune of true riches that also are good for our neighbours. Death will come, but our treasure is already secure. By faith we have acquired abounding riches above, and by faith we are freed from storing up treasures for ourselves here on earth.

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