

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 23-24, 2023



# TELL US A STORY

JESUS' POWERFUL PARABLES

## A Story of Perplexing Generosity



14940 62nd St. N - Stillwater, MN 55082

651-439-7831

[www.salemlutheran.org](http://www.salemlutheran.org)



## Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

*Tell Us A Story—A Story of Perplexing  
Generosity*

**W**elcome! Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

**PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP:** Almighty Father, you hear our every prayer and know our every need. Bless us as we praise you today for all your goodness and hear the prayers we offer in our Savior's name. Amen.

**THEME OF THE DAY:** Human beings have a strong sense of fairness. That is why it can be so perplexing when we see how God dispenses blessings and grace. We see people who mock God grow more prosperous than believers. Scripture tells us that those who convert on their deathbed obtain the same salvation as someone who was a lifelong Christian. How is that fair?

Through a simple story, Jesus teaches us a profound truth. 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. And we thank God for that.

**OUR WORSHIP SERIES:** A third of everything Jesus teaches in Scripture he taught in parables. Parables are simple stories that contain profound truths about life and eternity. For the believer, a parable takes a challenging spiritual fact and makes it clear. Since the parable conveys spiritual truth, for someone without faith the story remains only that—a story.

**A WORD ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION:** Our church observes the biblical practice of member communion (also called close communion). In Holy Communion we not only receive forgiveness from God, but we also express the unique relationship our members have with each other. If you are not a member of our congregation, we kindly ask that you not take communion today, but speak with our pastor after the service. We would love to share the sacrament with you in the future.

### ***SERVING GOD, SERVING US:***

Preacher: Pastor Dave Malchow

Piano: Paige Reiners

14940 62nd St N, Stillwater + [www.salemlutheran.org](http://www.salemlutheran.org) + 651-439-7831

[church@salemlutheran.org](mailto:church@salemlutheran.org)

# Order of Worship



## HYMN: I Sing As I Arise Today

CW 779



1 I sing as I a - rise to - day, I call on  
2 The word of God to be my speech, the hand of  
3 The work of God to be my joy, the house of  
4 I sing as I a - rise to - day; I cry out



my Cre - a - tor's might: the will of God to  
God to be my stay, the shield of God to  
God to be my rest, the grace of God to  
my Re - deem - er's name: Lord Je - sus Christ, my



be my guide, the eye of God to be my sight;  
be my strength, the path of God to be my way;  
be my song, the praise of God to be my best.  
hope, my all, to - day and ev - er - more the same.

*Please stand.*

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the  $\dagger$  Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

## CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS OF SINS

M: Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

C: **Blessed are they whose sin the Lord does not count against them.** (*Psalm 32*)

M: Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

C: **Almighty and merciful Father,**

**we have strayed from your ways like lost sheep.**

**We have followed what we have devised and desired in our hearts.**

**We have offended you and sinned against your holy law.**

**We have done those things that we should not have done,**

**And we have not done those things that we should have done.**

**Have mercy on us Lord!**

**Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,**

**according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

*Silence for meditation and reflection*

M: God, our merciful Father, has forgiven all our sins. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer and Savior. Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt by his death on the cross and freed us from death by his resurrection from the grave. We have peace with God now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

**Hymn Response: Glory Be to God the Father**

CW 608 sts. 1, 4



1 Glo - ry be to God the Fa - ther, glo - ry be to  
4 Glo - ry, bless - ing, praise e - ter - nal! thus the choir of



God the Son, glo - ry be to God the Spir - it:  
an - gels sings; Hon - or, rich - es, pow'r, do - min - ion!



great Je - ho - vah, Three in One! Glo - ry,  
thus its praise cre - a - tion brings. Glo - ry,



glo - ry while e - ter - nal a - ges run!  
glo - ry, glo - ry to the King of kings!

**THE WORD OF GOD**

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

**Prayer of the Day**

M: 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 your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

*Be seated.*

## **First Reading**

*Jonah 3:10-4:11*

*Jonah is perplexed by the generous forgiveness God shows the people of Nineveh.*

<sup>10</sup>When 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.

<sup>1</sup>But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. <sup>2</sup>He 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. <sup>3</sup>Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

<sup>4</sup>But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

<sup>5</sup>Jonah 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.

<sup>6</sup>Then 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. <sup>7</sup>But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. <sup>8</sup>When 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."

<sup>9</sup>But 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."

<sup>10</sup>But 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. <sup>11</sup>And 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—and also many animals?"

M: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

## **Second Reading**

*Romans 9:6-16*

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

<sup>6</sup>It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. <sup>7</sup>Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." <sup>8</sup>In 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. <sup>9</sup>For this

was how the promise was stated: “At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son.”

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

<sup>14</sup>What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! <sup>15</sup>For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

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

M: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand.*

## Gospel

Matthew 20:1-16

*Jesus tells us a story of God’s incredible generosity.*

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

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

“He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. <sup>6</sup>About 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?’

<sup>7</sup>“ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered.

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

<sup>8</sup>“When 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.’

<sup>9</sup>“The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. <sup>10</sup>So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. <sup>11</sup>When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. <sup>12</sup>‘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.’

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

<sup>16</sup>“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

*Be seated.*

## Children’s Devotion

### Hymn of the Day: Salvation unto Us Has Come CW 558 sts. 1-2, 5, 10



1 Sal - va - tion un - to us has come by God’s free grace and  
2 What God did in his law de - mand and none to him could  
5 Yet as the law must be ful - filled or we must die de -  
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  
ren - der caused wrath and woe on ev - ’ry hand for man, the  
spair - ing, Christ came and has God’s an - ger stilled, our hu - man  
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  
vile of - fend - er. Our flesh has not those pure de - sires the  
na - ture shar - ing. He has for us the law o - beyed and  
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.  
spir - it of the law re - quires, and lost is our con - di - tion.  
thus the Fa - ther’s ven - ge - ance stayed which o - ver us im - pend - ed.  
have re - vealed your sav - ing love; your bless - ed name be hal - lowed!

*“Grace is not fair. Praise the Lord!”*

*Please stand after the sermon.*

**THANKSGIVING**

**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.**

*Be seated.*



## Offering



Our members give offerings to support God's work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren't expected to.

We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



Please stand.

## Prayer of the Church

M: 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

M: 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.

**C: Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.**

M: 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 draws near.

**C: Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.**

M: Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

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

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

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

**C: Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

## **SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*Our Lord Jesus has given us a holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. The meal also bears witness to the unity and fellowship we share with each other. Therefore, we invite to communion all those who share in our confession by virtue of their membership here or in a sister WELS or ELS congregation. We ask visitors to speak to the pastor before communing.*

M: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.


**C: We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: 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:

## Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of heav - en - ly hosts:  
heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na, ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he,  
bless - ed is he, bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## Words of Institution

M: 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  $\dagger$  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  $\dagger$  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."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

## O Christ, Lamb of God



O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God,  
you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.  
O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world;  
grant us your peace. A - - - men.

Be seated.

## Communion Distribution

*For those who cannot have any alcohol for personal or medical reasons we offer white grape juice. You will find cups of white grape juice in the center of each communion tray. Gluten-free wafers are available by request for those medically unable to tolerate gluten.*

*Communicants may choose to receive the wine by individual or common cup. If you choose the common cup, please allow the individual tray to pass and then assist the minister by helping to tip the common cup.*



# HYMN: Jesus Comes Today with Healing

CW 668 sts. 1-3, 5



1 Je - sus comes to - day with heal - ing, knock - ing at my  
2 Christ him - self, the priest pre - sid - ing, yet in bread and  
3 Un - der bread and wine, though low - ly, I re - ceive the  
5 Let me praise God's bound - less fa - vor, whose own feast of



door, ap - peal - ing, of - f'ring par - don, grace, and peace.  
wine a - bid - ing in this ho - ly sac - ra - ment,  
Sav - ior ho - ly, blood and bod - y, giv'n for me,  
love I sa - vor, bid - den by his gra - cious call.



He him - self makes prep - a - ra - tion, and I hear his  
gives the bread of life, once bro - ken, and the cup, the  
ver - y Lamb of God from heav - en, who to bit - ter  
Wed - ding gar - ments he pro - vides me, with a robe of



in - vi - ta - tion: "Come and taste the bless - ed feast."  
pre - cious to - ken of his sa - cred cov - e - nant.  
death was giv - en, hung up - on the curs - ed tree.  
white he hides me, fits me for the roy - al hall.

*Please stand at the pastor's direction.*

## Response of Thanksgiving

M: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: **His mercy endures forever.**

*Psalms 118:1*

M: Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

C: **We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

*1 Corinthians 11:26*

## Closing Prayer & Blessing

M: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift.

We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith 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.

C: **Amen.**

## Blessing

M: 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.

C: Amen.

## Hymn: Not unto Us

CW sts. 1,4



1 Not un - to us, not un - to us be glo - ry, Lord;  
4 Not un - to us but to your name be glo - ry, Lord,



not un - to us but to your name be praise;  
for grace so rich, so wide, so high, so free.



not un - to us but to your name all hon - or be giv'n  
A - bide with us till trav - 'ling days are o - ver and done,



for match - less mer - cy, for - give - ness, and grace.  
and pil - grim feet lead us home, Lord, to you.

## Silent Prayer and Announcements

### Acknowledgments

Setting One from Christian Worship

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Reprinted under OneLicense # 48708 and CCLI # 630266

### Fellowship & Spiritual Growth

Sunday morning, all are invited to enjoy refreshments and fellowship in the entry between services. Sunday JAM for children ages 3yrs to 6th grade starts at 9:10am in the sanctuary. Adult Bible study begins at 9:15 in the fellowship hall downstairs.

### For Worship Next Week

Worship theme: Tell Me a Story! A Story of Spiritual Insincerity

Bible Readings: Ezekial 18:1-4, 25-32, Phillipians 3:12-21, Matthew 21:33-43

Hymns: 648, 547, 521, 924

## PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

(Also printed in the hymnal)

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: *He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.*

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: *I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?*

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: *I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.*

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: *His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.*

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: *In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.*

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: *I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."*

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: *I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.*

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

# *Welcome to worship!*

## FOR OUR GUESTS

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help. Please take note of a few helpful things:

- † **Restrooms** are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance. Both men's and women's restrooms are equipped with **diaper changing tables** for your convenience.
- † Our sanctuary is equipped with an amplified "loop" system for **hearing assistance**. Please set hearing aids to the "T" position.
- † You will find a **connection card** in your pew. We ask members and guests to share their names and contact info, and invite you to share requests for contact or prayers. Cards can be placed in the offering basket or left on the table near the sanctuary entrance.
- † Salem members give an **offering** to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to make a donation you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.

## FOR THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

We love to see families worship together and we welcome children to sing and pray and grow with us in our services. Please note these special worship aids and helps for families:

- † Children's bulletins & "*quiet bags*" for your child's use in worship are available in the entry, just to the left of the office hallway. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- † If your child needs to be nursed or quieted for a few moments you can use our "*cry room*" down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is shown live on a TV in the room.
- † Sunday mornings, before the hymn of the day and sermon, children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for a short devotion on God's Word. Parents may accompany their children as they wish.

Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God  
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may  
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.

