

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland
14th Sunday of Pentecost, August 29, 2021

Welcome and Introduction – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Hymn 376, stanzas 1-2

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee

Opening Sentence: The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

Confession

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and have done those things which we ought not to have done.
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults,
restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesus our Lord;
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

Absolution

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Invitation to Venite and Psalm

O Lord, open thou our lips,
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Venite - seated

*O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
and the strength of the hills is his also.*

*The sea is his and he made it,
and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.*

Psalm 15 – see lesson insert

First Lesson –Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Second Reading – James 1:17-27 - see lesson insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God*

Hymn 493, stanzas 1-2 *O for a thousand tongues to sing*

The Gospel - Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 – see insert

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins

The Apostles' Creed - standing

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer - seated

*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,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Suffrages - seated

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;
And grant us thy salvation.
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;
And make thy chosen people joyful.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
For only in thee can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under thy care;
And guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let thy way be known upon earth;
Thy saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collects for Sundays, 14th Sunday after Pentecost, and Young Persons

O God, who makes us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Grant us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the days to come may be spent in your favor, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold to their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*

Announcements and America

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them. Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 608, stanzas 1 and 4

Eternal Father, strong to save

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia.

Hymns for 14th Sunday after Pentecost – August 29, 2021

Hymn, stanzas 1-2

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee

Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee, praising thee, their sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.

All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, blooming meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.

Hymn 493, stanzas 1-2

O for a thousand tongues to sing

O for a thousand tongues to sing my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace!

My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim
and spread through all the earth abroad the honors of thy Name.

Hymn 608, stanzas 1 and 4

Eternal Father, strong to save

Eternal Father, strong to save, whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to thee for those in peril on the sea.

O Trinity of love and power, thy children shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe, protect them whereso e'er they go;
thus evermore shall rise to thee glad hymns of praise from land and sea.

Lessons for 14th Sunday after Pentecost – August 29, 2021

Collect: Lord of all power and might, the author and give of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of our ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you. You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the people, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Psalm 15

Lord, who may dwell in our tabernacle?

who may abide upon your holy hill?

Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right,

who speaks the truth from his heart.

There is no guile upon his tongue; he does no evil to his friend;

he does not heap contempt upon his neighbor.

In his sight the wicked is rejected,

] *but he honors those who fear the Lord.*

He has sworn to do no wrong

and does not take back his word.

He does not give his money in hope of gain,
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.
Whoever does these things
shall never be overthrown.

Second Reading: James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Gospel: Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are so many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 14th Sunday after Pentecost, August 29, 2021.

Are you ready for yet another Named Sunday? Of course, you are. So here goes.

Today is **Start of School Sunday**. It's the first day of school, and you're the teacher. And you've been busy preparing for this day. No good teacher just walks into a classroom on the first day without substantial preparation. As soon as one year ends, good teachers are thinking about the start of the next year.

And one of the things a good teacher does is create a welcoming and challenging and protective environment. I'm thinking of teachers of young students, but these principles apply to all teachers at all grade levels. Nobody deserves and nobody wants a dull and unsafe environment.

One of the techniques that good teachers use to create a stimulating environment are posters, visual reminders, of how to have the best possible experience. Some of these reminders are behavior-oriented and some are academic-oriented. "Be kind to one another" and "listen carefully."

Today's lesson from the Letter of James (**James 1:17-27**) is an adult example. "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness be doers of the word, and not merely hearers ... look into the perfect law of liberty and persevere."

Imagine walking into a classroom on the first day of school with these reminders surrounding you. Well, we don't have to imagine. These reminders are all around us in this classroom: the Bible, the Cross, the organ, the flag, the altar, the pulpit.

And, yes, the pew, the desk, one's very own desk. How exciting is that. Remember when you had your very first desk, either with a flip-top or shelf. Well, now you have a new piece of furniture: a kneeler.

Well, at its best, the Church is a classroom. It is a living classroom. Many of you are familiar with the Living Classrooms Foundation at Baltimore's Inner Harbor. It's a great and appropriate name for an engaging educational experience. And what is one of the first things one does boarding an educational boat? One goes over the safety rules, all designed to make the boating experience the best that it can be.

We do the same thing on the first day of a new school year. And we do the same thing each time we consider a lesson like this morning's Letter of James.

We see safety rules as well from the Book of Deuteronomy **(Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9)**. "So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you."

When Israel observed these "statutes and ordinances," life was better than when Israel did not observe these rules. It is the same for children in a classroom and members of a family or members of a community of any sort. "You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the people, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!'"

This is the response we hope people perceive when they pass by St. Christopher-by-the-Sea and any other community of believers. People will know us by our record of obedience and joy.

What is it that every teacher hopes when there are visitors to the school? **Obedience and joy**. That combination is a sign of careful preparation and follow-through. There's a comparable sign when we have visitors here. We hope that the visitors observe thoughtfulness and happiness. Just as we hope that every classroom has a thoughtful, well-prepared teacher and eager, willing students.

Today's **Collect** is applicable to any situation where there is a relationship of preparation and follow-through. "Increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring forth in us the fruit of good works."

What is the greatest gift a teacher can receive? It's a former student who returns to school to say thank you and to note how he or she, now an adult, is implementing the practices that he or she learned in school. That implementation can be in a profession or a home or a setting of any sort where preparation and follow-through are emphasized.

Our Psalm this morning (**Psalm 15**) sets a very high bar: blameless life, truth from the heart, no guile upon the tongue, no evil to friends, no contempt of one's neighbor, no taking a bribe, no taking back one's word.

Where is the preparation for clearing this high bar? Well, a huge part of such preparation, such training, is high expectations. And isn't it true that each year when good teachers post classroom rules, those good teachers are hopeful that the students will follow through and experience an environment that will serve them and others well as these students pass through grade levels and enter adulthood.

Now, having lifted up the Letter to James, the passage from Deuteronomy, and the Psalm, we need to address today's Gospel (**Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**).

The content of this selection from Mark's Gospel reminds all of us – teachers and students, parents and children, employers and employees, leaders and followers, friends and neighbors – that it is not just preparation and follow-through that are “from within.”

In other words, there are other behaviors that need our attention. Mark details these behaviors in a sobering manner, and adds “All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Which suggests that we really do need the guidance of good teachers, including the Lord himself. People who lay out expectations and provide guidelines for meeting those expectations. And forgiveness when we falter, which we will.

The message is that education in general, and faith in particular, even when faith is grounded in simplicity, requires hard work. And when work is hard, prayer is useful. A prayer like this morning's Collect: “Graft in our hearts true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring forth in us the fruit of good works.”

In this one sentence, notice the strategy: graft in our hearts ... nourish us ... bring forth in us. We are the Lord's vehicle for sharing the Love of God. He's counting on us. It's a challenging assignment, but would we want it any other way?

Thank you, Lord, for the confidence. We'll do our best, with your help of course. Amen.

