

St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland
18th Sunday of Pentecost, September 26, 2021

Welcome and Introduction – The Rev. Charles Rowins

Hymn 383, stanzas 1-3

Fairest Lord Jesus

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 19:7-14 – see lesson insert

First Lesson – Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 - see lesson insert

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

Second Reading – James 5:13-20 - see lesson insert

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

Hymn 627, stanzas 1-2

Lamp of our feet

The Gospel - Mark 9:38-50 – 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, 18th Sunday after Pentecost, and Mission

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.*

O God, because without you we are not able to please you, mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of your servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may ever be defended by your gracious and ready help; 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 497, stanzas 1-2

How bright appears the morning star

Dismissal

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

Hymns for Pentecost 18 – September 26, 2021

Hymn 383, stanzas 1-3

Fairest Lord Jesus

Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature, O thou of God and man the Son;
thee will I cherish, thee will I honor, thou, my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands, robed in the blooming garb of spring:
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer, who makes the woeful heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight, and all the twinkling, starry host:
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer, than all the angels heaven can boast.

Hymn 627, stanzas 1-2

Lamp of our feet

Lamp of our feet, whereby we trace our path when wont to stray;
stream from the fount of heavenly grace, brook by the traveler's way.

Bread of our souls, whereon we feed, true manna from on high;
our guide and chart, wherein we read of realms beyond the sky.

Hymn 497, stanzas 1-2

How bright appears the morning star

How bright appears the Morning Star, with mercy beaming from afar;
the host of heaven rejoices;

O righteous Branch, O Jesse's Rod! Thou Son of Man and Son of God!
we, too, will lift our voices:

Jesus, Jesus! Holy holy, yet most lowly, draw thou near us;
great Emmanuel, come and hear us.

Though circled by the hosts on high, he deigned to cast a pitying eye
upon his helpless creature;

the whole creation's Head and Lord, by highest seraphim adored,
assumed our very nature;

Jesus, grant us, through thy merit, to inherit thy salvation;
hear, O hear our supplication.

Hymn 655**O Jesus, I have promised**

O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me, my Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle, if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway, if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Master and my friend.

Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, 18th Sunday after Pentecost, September 26, 2021.

At the center of our worship is the Bible. It is where we hear about our roots and our responsibilities and the consequences of being true to our roots and carrying out our responsibilities.

You and I have lots of roots, but there is one Root from which – actually from whom – all other roots flow. And that would be God: the Creator, the Savior, the Sustainer.

This God is described beautifully in this morning's Psalm (**Psalm 19:7-14**).

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;
the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.
The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.

If this truly is the nature of the Root from whom all other roots flow, we should be really grateful. And not only grateful, but happy, and ready to support God at every turn.

But, what we discover is that supporting God at every turn is not a cakewalk. Indeed in supporting God, there can be danger and disappointment and second thoughts.

In our first lesson today (**Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29**), we are introduced to Eldad and Medad. They are a likeable pair. We would like to be like Eldad and Medad because, according to the lesson, "the spirit rested on them." In other words, they had God's stamp of approval, and they were eager to do the work that God had assigned.

This was the assignment: prophesy in the camp. Don't worry about prophesying in the tent. I need you to prophesy in the camp. And, so they did. But, because they were not "elders," people didn't respect their efforts. Joshua was one of those who complained. "My lord Moses, stop them!" To which, Moses asks "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets."

My guess is that you all have had a similar experience. You have felt called to intervene in some awkward situation, and have felt the arrows of some who felt you should mind your own business. Well, hopefully you also felt the Lord coming to your defense. “I asked you to intervene on my behalf, and you did so. And I am grateful, and I want you to feel vindicated.” “Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”

Easier said than done, of course. Consider from the Letter of James **(James 5:13-20)** the story of Elijah. “Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.”

We’re not sure why Elijah prayed that it not rain, and then changed his mind after three years and prayed that it would rain. Usually we pray for rain when it is needed for a good harvest. Was there a reason why Elijah would not want it to rain for three years? We don’t know. What we do know is that God responded in the affirmative to both prayers three years apart. So, maybe, just maybe, we should be both careful what we pray for and patient for what we pray.

So, if we feel called to intervene in a situation where such intervention might anger some people, we need to remember Eldad and Medad. The Spirit rested on them, and they responded to the Spirit. Doing what we think is right, especially in difficult situations, is always a risk, but it is a risk for the Lord. Do I have His approval? Do I have His encouragement? Am I willing to take the arrows that might come my way?

Imagine being confident of what we ought to do in a tough situation, but fearing that the Lord won’t have our back. Such a misalignment between our sense of right and the Lord’s support would be troublesome, to say the least. Enter today’s lesson from Mark’s Gospel **(Mark 9:38-50)**. Better to have one hand than two, one foot than two, one eye than two, if the difference is between doing the Lord’s work and not doing it.

What we strive for is to “be at peace.” That peace though comes at a price. Jesus did the heavy lifting here. He gave his life. Our responsibility and ultimately

our joy is to thank Jesus for that sacrifice through our own sacrificial living, including supporting others making their sacrifice.

When we see people like Eldad and Medad making the tough call – represented by prophesying in the camp – we need not only to thank them for their bravery, but to think also about what we are called to do in tough situations.

And where do we get the courage to step up? That courage comes from the Lord, the Root, from which all good roots flow. Taking in the energy that God as revealed in Jesus is described in today's Collect as "heavenly treasure."

And this treasure is not hidden by God. It is revealed by God. God gives us a map, not to find the treasure, but to receive the treasure. God Incarnate, Jesus, came among us and said in all sorts of interesting and compelling ways, "Here I am, just as my Father promised. Invite me in, please. I can change your life. Let me help. I'll die for you. And I will also rise for you."

And one more consideration. There will be times when I need you to represent me in tough situations. You'll be challenged, but you'll never be alone. And you'll never be taken for granted. Others might take you for granted, but I will not. In fact, I'll be with you always in and through my Holy Spirit.

One of the hymns that we don't sing often is #655. The hymn is entitled "O Jesus, I have promised." It's in a section of the hymnal called "The Christian Life." We'll give a try at some point, but for the time being let's focus on the lyrics, a skill we have developed during Co-Vid. These lyrics are on the reverse of your song sheet.

O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me, my Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle, if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway, if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Master and my friend.

So it is that at the conclusion of worship services, we often dismiss folks with these familiar words: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore.*

The Grace of the Lord. What an incredible gift. And it's ours for the receiving and the sharing. Amen.

Lessons for 18th Sunday after Pentecost – September 26, 2021

Collect: O God, you declare your almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity: Grant us the fullness of your grace, that we, running to obtain your promises, may become partakers of your heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29

The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at." Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the Lord became very angry, and Moses was displeased. So Moses said to the Lord, "Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child,' to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, 'Give us meat to eat?' I am not able to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once – if I have found favor in your sight – and do not let me see my misery." So the Lord said to Moses, "Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you." So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but that had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying

in the camp.” And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!”

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

Psalm 19:7-14

The law of the Lord is perfect and revives the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the innocent.

The statutes of the Lord are just and rejoice the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is clear and gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever;

the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold,

sweeter far than honey, than honey in the comb.

By them also is your servant enlightened,

and in keeping them there is great reward.

Who can tell how often he offends?

cleanse me from my secret faults.

Above all, keep your servant from presumptuous sins; let them not get dominion over me;

then shall I be whole and sound, and innocent of a great offense.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,

O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Second Reading: James 5:13-20

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins

to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and of three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

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

Gospel: Mark 9:38-50

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

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