

# TRINITY 14

September 13 2020

Old Test: Proverbs 4:10-23

Epistle: Galatians 5:16-22

Gospel: Luke 17:11-19

## ***Standing...***

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We hear the account of the ten lepers twice every year—  
once on the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity and the other, on Thanksgiving morn.  
Mercy is the cry of Christ's Church.  
And our response to mercy shown to us?  
We offer our thanks, just as one of the ten did.

Let us pray. Father of all mercies, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be acceptable in Your sight O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

## ***Sitting...***

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."  
This was the cry of the ten lepers—  
men who were nothing more than the walking dead.  
We think Covid is bad.  
These men felt their desperation and helplessness  
down to their bones.

This isn't the first time someone cried out for mercy to Jesus.  
Blind Bartimaeus did, so did the father of the epileptic son.  
The Canaanite woman cries for mercy, and so did a tax collector.  
They all cry for help—for compassion, and grace from Jesus.  
And how does Jesus respond?  
He doesn't avoid the lepers, like everyone else did.  
Nor, does He tell them to pull themselves up  
by their own bootstraps. Mercy is to have compassion.  
To bring help—to show kindness.  
Jesus displays divine love by healing them,  
by showing them mercy.

Contrast this with those believed they were not in need—  
 men like the Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes—  
 Jesus showed no mercy to them.  
 Because they didn't think they needed it.

See, those who seek mercy, have nothing to give.  
 They are at the end of their rope.  
 It's for those who mourn their failures and sins.  
 For those who know that they can't overcome sin,  
 those who can't avoid eternal death, and who can't defeat the devil.  
 Mercy is for those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
 for those who know that they can't meet up to the standards  
 of God's holy Law.

This is so essential that we cry out for mercy every week when we sing the "Kyrie."  
 Doing so right at the beginning of the service.  
 Crying out, just like the lepers,  
 "Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy on us!"

But wait—we're not lepers. So why do we do this?  
 Well, for the lepers, there was no hiding their mess.  
 Their predicament was obvious. whereas we often attempt to conceal our chaos,  
 pretending we're fine.  
 But we're not fine.  
 We're weak, we struggle,  
 and we need help outside of ourselves.

Before crying for mercy, what did we confess?  
 That we're poor, miserable sinners,  
 in thought, word and deed.  
 And what did we receive from that confession?  
 The forgiveness of our sins.  
 Then why ask God for mercy?  
 So that God would help us in the midst of sin.

Though we've been absolved, our world is a world of sin and death.  
 All around us we see the results of hatred, envy, lust, and greed.  
 We hear of natural disasters, diseases, war, and pandemic.  
 Yet, we acknowledge there's still a problem.  
 It's this old nature of ours, that we still wrestle with.

This body of sin and death.  
 Thus, in the midst of all of this chaos and struggle,  
 we sing and pray by faith, "Lord have mercy!"

In doing so, we acknowledge  
 that we cannot pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.  
 We acknowledge our sinful condition.  
     We acknowledge our powerlessness in this sin-sick world  
     in the face of sin, death, and the devil.  
     But, we acknowledge as well—by faith—that the Lord is  
     sovereign over all things and all situations.  
     Beloved, the Lord has compassion on sinners like us,  
     not turning a blind eye to a broken cry for mercy.

So how does Jesus answer us?  
 He gives us His Word, read and preached into your ears.  
 Then, He give us His very Body and Blood, to eat and drink,  
     which cleanses us from all sin. It's precisely the help we need.  
     Precisely the help—the mercy, God wants to give.

Then having received the mercy from God in which we ask,  
 what's our response? We give our thanks—  
     just like one of the ten lepers, the Samaritan nonetheless.  
     How do we say it?  
     "O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good...  
     And His mercy endureth, forever!"  
     Forever.

This is our liturgy—where we confess we are poor, miserable sinners  
 and God does something about it. He absolves us.  
     But He wants to give us more—grace upon grace.  
     He gives us His Word and His Body and Blood.  
     And then we offer our thanks.

Beloved, Christ Jesus, did not cast the poor lepers off to the side who lifted their voices  
 for mercy. Nor does He cast you aside when your cry is the same.  
 He has shown mercy by His perfect life and His nailed scarred hands,  
     longing to give you mercy continually in His Words of Absolution  
     and His Body and Blood from His Holy Altar.  
     He will not despise your cry of mercy

for He does not forsake His own.

This is your prayer, and mine too.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy...and He grants it. Amen.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.