

Order of Worship for September 19, 2021

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Have No Fear, Little Flock”*- Hymn #735

Confession and Forgiveness: p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Delight yourself in the LORD,

C: and He will give you the desires of your heart.

P: Commit your way to the LORD;

C: trust in Him, and He will act.

P: He will bring forth your righteousness as the light,

C: and your justice as the noonday.

P: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him;

C: fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

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

P: Delight yourself in the LORD,

C: and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest): pg. 204

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: O God, whose strength is made perfect in weakness, grant us humility and childlike faith that we may please You in both will and deed; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 11:18–20

R: The LORD made it known to me and I knew; then You showed me their deeds. But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me they devised schemes, saying, “Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more.” But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously,

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: James 3:13—4:10

R: Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that He has made to dwell in us”? But He gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: (p. 205)**Holy Gospel: Mark 9:30–37**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 9th chapter

C: Glory to You, O Lord

P: [The disciples] went on from there and passed through Galilee. And [Jesus] did not want anyone to know, for He was teaching His disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And when He is killed, after three days He will rise.” But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

And they came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

Sermon Hymn: “*Lord, ‘Tis Not That I Did Choose Thee*”- **Hymn # 573**

Sermon: “*Jesus Took a Child*” **Mark 9:30–37**

Children can be so cute. Politicians know that. They love having photo ops where they go visit a school and talk with them. It makes for good PR. Even Saddam Hussein tried to get in on that when he tried a TV appearance with a nervous hostage British child in August, 1990 before the Gulf War began.

So it is only natural for us to see Jesus with children. Imagine Jesus without having children around. It would seem so out of character.

But we also have to see our view of children today. Children can be cute to us because of what it means to have children today. It is a great tragedy if a child dies. Today in this country around 6.5 children out of 1,000 die. In 1900 250 children out of 1,000--1 out of every 4-- didn't make it to adulthood. In 1800 only around 500 survived—half of all children born! You could not invest the kind of emotional energy into getting attached to child, especially as babies and toddlers when they were most at risk. And people had a lot more children because they didn't have birth control, they got married at an earlier age, and they needed children to help do chores. You didn't have the luxury of thinking of children as cute.

That was even more so in Jesus' time. In that culture men often ate the meal before the rest of the family. It was not so much a matter of men being cruel, but of survival. The man was the one who had to work and make the means by which the family survived. If he was weak and sick, everyone in the family suffered. You couldn't afford the means to give special clothing or toys to children. It is not that people didn't love their children; it was just that they couldn't afford to make such a fuss about them. And they weren't cute.

It was also a world in which truly children were to be seen not heard. If someone was important in society, he was too important to be bothered with children. No mother would dare let her child. No matter how cute you and I might think that child is, interfere with someone like that. Taking time for a child would be completely beneath the dignity of someone important.

Yet Mark tells us, “Jesus took a child and put him in the midst of the disciples, and put the child in His arms.” This was not a “natural” thing to do. This was not for a good photo op. This was shocking! If that was not enough, Jesus says, “Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.” Choosing a child? What was wrong with that?

When looking at famous sports team one that often comes to mind is the 1992 US Olympic Basketball team, better known as the “Dream Team.” After a long time policy of not allowing professional athletes participate in the games, they were finally allowed in 1992. The US had dominated men's basketball until 1968, when they barely won. Then they were shocked by the Soviet Union in 1972 and only took the bronze in 1988. But in 1992 they had

Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird, Patrick Ewing, Charles Barkley, John Stockton, Karl Malone, Clyde Drexler, Scottie Pippen—all Hall of Fame players! How could they lose?

Too bad you can't have a team like that if you are in a fantasy game. You are limited because other people want the players you want. I remember playing pick-up baseball. You would imagine you represented an All-Star line-up. You would come to bat and pretend you were someone like Mickey Mantle or Hank Aaron or Willie Mays. The better the player, the better you thought you would be. Perhaps as a child you played a pick-up game where you choose sides. Whom would you pick for your team? The slowest? The most awkward? The smallest?

But that is what Jesus picked. He didn't take the child because the child was cute and cuddly. He took a child because it was the least obvious. It was like picking the worst for the team.

Americans may act like we like to see the little guy win. We like upsets—they are what make a week in football exciting. But that is not how you win. The movie "Moneyball" was about the general manager of the Oakland A's baseball team who struggled because they did not have a big market and could not afford to keep key players. The movie shows how he used computer statistics to choose new players for the team who were inexpensive, but actually helped the team to win a record 20 games in a row. The movie makes it appear that a bunch of losers accomplished that. What it doesn't show is that the team also had Miguel Tejada, who won the American MVP that season, and Barry Zito, who won the Cy Young Award for best pitcher. Oakland won because of good players.

But Jesus did not. Why did He choose the disciples in the first place? They may have thought He did because they had something to offer. That is why Mark says, "They had argued with one another about who was the greatest." But that was hardly the case. No, by choosing a child Jesus was sowing them and us today that He does not choose because of who we are, but because of who He is.

Jesus has just told the disciples for the second time, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him." That is not what we would choose. We want to win, not lose. We want to succeed, not fail. But Jesus chose the path that lead to the cross, the very bottom. In Jesus we see that God does not do things by the way we would choose to do them. He does things by grace.

That is why Jesus put a child before Him. A child is nothing; it is helpless. The child has nothing to offer, just as we are in the face of God. Yet, by grace, God chooses us!

That affects how we relate to each other. God's Church is for all kinds of people. God doesn't just choose the brightest and the best, but from all peoples. Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 compares the people in the Church with parts of the human body. He says, "Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we

treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty.” Because Jesus accepts all kinds of people, the Church will contain people who often will not fit in with other people. God’s “Dream Team” is not the same as ours.

We have a Student Fellowship time each Wednesday evening when the university is in session. The first class this semester asked the question, “Am I Good Enough?” That is a question we ask whether we are a student trying to pass a class, an employee starting a new job, a young parent, a newlywed wife, or middle aged worker unsure that he still has what it takes to do his job. But with God it is never about, “Am I good enough?” We are never “good enough.” We all sin. In Jesus the question is now, “Am I loved enough?” The fact that God has called us in Jesus to be a part of His team more than answers that question. We look to the cross and see Jesus dying for us. We know we are so very loved!

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father, for You consider even the least of us and sent Your Son, Christ Jesus, into this world, not to be serve, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for all. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven, we praise and make great Your Holy name, evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed as You Lord of heaven and earth for You tear down the proud who try to make themselves great in Your eyes and lift up the humble like the child Jesus took in His arms. We thank You that Jesus comes to us in the special way as He invites us to share the meal of His true body and precious blood in Holy Communion. Grant us Your Holy Spirit so that we receive this gift in true faith.

C: Amen.

Lord’s Prayer, The Words of our Lord, and Pax Domini (*The Peace of the Lord*): p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*): p.210

Distribution Hymn: *“Father Welcomes”* - **Hymn #605**
 “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” - **Hymn # 594**

Dismissal

Nunc Dimittis:*(Song of Simeon)* p. 211

Prayer After Communion:

P: Lord God, You call us to work in Your vineyard and leave no one standing idle. Set us to our tasks in the work of Your kingdom, and help us to order our lives by Your wisdom, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen

Benedicamus (“Let Us Bless”), **and Benediction** (Blessing): p. 212

Closing Hymn: *“Children of the Heavenly Father”* - **Hymn #725**

Postlude