

Order of Worship for April 6, 2025

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing” - Hymn #421

Confession and Forgiveness p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: Salvation belongs to the LORD;

C: Your blessing be on Your people!

P: But You, O LORD, are a shield about me,

C: my glory, and the lifter of my head.

P: I cried aloud to the LORD,

C: and He answered me from His holy hill.

P: I lay down and slept;

C: I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.

P: I will not be afraid of many thousands of people

C: who have set themselves against me all around.

**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: Salvation belongs to the LORD;

C: Your blessing be on Your people!

Kyrie (“Lord, Have Mercy”): pg 204

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray: Almighty God, by Your great goodness mercifully look upon Your people that we may be governed and preserved evermore in body and soul; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: “Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle” - Hymn #454

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

R: Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings forth chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: “Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. The wild beasts will honor Me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to My chosen people, the people whom I formed for Myself that they might declare My praise.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Philippians 3:4b–14

R: If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 20:9-20

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 20th chapter

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: And [Jesus] began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.’ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.” When they heard this, they said, “Surely not!” But He looked directly at them and said, “What then is this

that is written: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone”? Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

The scribes and the chief priests sought to lay hands on Him at that very hour, for they perceived that He had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. So they watched Him and sent spies, who pretended to be sincere, that they might catch Him in something He said, so as to deliver Him up to the authority and jurisdiction of the governor.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Creed: 1st Article of Creed and Explanation

Sermon Hymn: *“Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness”* - **Hymn # 788**

Sermon: *“To Whom Does It Belong?”* - **Luke 20:9-20**

Fighting has resumed in the Gaza strip. For all the news it makes it is just an area that would cover Story and Boone counties. But it has been fought over because of conflicting claims about who should own the land of Palestine. Jewish immigrants first came from Europe in the late 1800’s hoping to settle in the land that was given to their ancestors through Abraham’s son Isaac from God. But the people already there also had a claim that many believed came from God through Abraham’s son Ishmael. So, to whom does the land belong?

That issue has come up in the United States when considering how European immigrants took land from the Native Americans. So, there is talk about returning land to the original owners. But who are they? We can say “Native Americans,” but which ones? There were hundreds of tribes before Europeans came. The Oscar winning movie “Dances with Wolves” highlighted the Sioux nation. But the Sioux were actually only buffalo hunters on horseback. Up until the late 1700’s they lived with their sister Chippewa tribes in the woods of Minnesota. Only when horses got on to the Great Plains that got away from Europeans did they move on the prairies and make their living off buffalo. They did that by overcoming other tribes that lived there before them. The Commanche controlled the southern plains by pillaging other tribes and later the Mexicans. Famous tribes like the Apache and Navajo are known as “Athabascan” because they share the same language group as the Inuit and came to North America well after other tribes. So which tribes should get what land? To whom does it belong?

That is an important question for us, because we have so many things. And it is to our advantage, especially financially, with things like houses and cars, to own and not lease and rent them. To whom does it belong? So much of our lives revolves around making sure it is mine!

That was the issue that Jesus brings up in the story He tells of the wicked tenants. A man who owns a vineyard leaves it in the care of tenants and goes a long way away. After a while he sends a servant to collect some of the profits from the harvest. But they beat him up and sent him away. This happens a second time. The man decides to send his son, believing they would not harm him. But the tenants plot together and kill the son, thinking they will get the vineyard for themselves.

It may seem ridiculous to us that by killing the son they could claim it as their own. But we have to see this in light of absentee owners in the Roman Empire. As the empire grew, it

became important to maintain. The Roman proved they could beat anyone in battle, but wars are expensive, and it is better to keep peace by politics. One of the ways Rome did this is by giving ownership of lands to rulers who were loyal to the empire. At first this was not an issue because the places granted to them were nearby. But as the empire gave out more and more of these grants, often they gave ownership to people who lived far away from the land. Without modern communication and transportation, you could easily lose control of the land assigned to you. If you were absent enough from it, the local people who cared for it could claim ownership.

Jesus' story is directed to the enemies who opposed Him. To set the background for it, He had already told the story in Luke of the ruler who left his estate in the hands of servants. He notes how when the man was away, a delegation sought to take away his power. This story was not told in thin air. Jesus' enemies knew He was referring to how the land of Israel had been given by the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus to Herod the Great. When Herod died, when Jesus was just a boy, the land was divided among his sons. One of them, Archelaus, was deposed by Caesar when a delegation of people from the area of Judea around Jerusalem appealed to him. Archelaus was replaced by a Roman governor, one of which was Pontius Pilate. So, they know Jesus is claiming to be from God, and they are trying to stop Him.

On top of that Jesus' enemies had come to Him with what they thought was the perfect question, the one that would get Him to make a gaffe and discredit Him. They asked Him, "But what authority do you do what you do?" They were hoping that He would outright say He was getting it from God so they could accuse Him of false teaching. Instead, He asked them, "By what authority did John the Baptist do what he did, by God or men?" We might think Jesus was doing a classic example of evading a question, but among the Jewish rabbis the best answer to a question was what they called a "higher question." It was like raising the stakes in poker. They knew that if they said John did it from God, then Jesus would ask why they didn't follow him. If they said he was from men, then the people, who had believed John, would get mad. They didn't answer, and left frustrated.

Jesus' answer shows that He was really from God. His enemies clearly recognize that the owner of the vineyard is God, his servants were the prophets, and the son is Jesus. They are acting like God is an absentee owner whose property they can claim as their own. They have turned away from God's commands to follow their own. They are living as if it belonged to them, not God.

That is our problem as well. We act as if what we have is ours, like a child insisting, "It is my toy!" think of how families can fight over inheritance. "It is mine because I worked for it. I deserve this." We see how we consider what is right and wrong. If something favors "me," then it is right and just. It is the way it is supposed to be. And where that really can affect us in seeing that our position in life, our relationship with God is something we worked for, something we deserve.

We know what happened to those who insisted things were their way, not Jesus'. As Jesus promised they lost it all in 70 AD when the Romans crushed the Jewish rebellion and razed Jerusalem and the temple. It will be our world when it comes to an end. All that we try to build up and claim as our own, will be destroyed. It won't belong to any of us.

But "the stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." Jesus came to show us that it really all belongs to God—and that includes us. He came to be rejected by the selfishness

that insists that it is “mine,” so that we can live knowing it is all God’s—and rejoicing in that because we belong to a God who loves us so much. St. Paul says about this in Ephesians 2:

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of His household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.

In that “building” there is no fight over what belongs to whom. It is all God’s who lovingly shares all with us as He has in giving us His Son.

The story is told about the difference between heaven and hell. In hell the people are sitting by a banquet hall filled with food, but are starving because their utensils are too long for them to put in their mouths. We see the same view of heaven, but the people are joyfully feasting because they use their utensils to feed the person on the opposite side of the table. That is what happens when we realize it is all God’s.

“To Whom does it belong?” To our mighty and most loving Savior!

Hymn of Response: “*Christ is Our Cornerstone*” - Hymn #912

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing our Ministry

Offering and Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: p. 208

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 instead of destroying us for rejecting You, You sent Your Son Christ Jesus to be rejected by all of us on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven and our hearts turned to You. 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; We thank You LORD God, creator of the universe, for in Your great love for us You endured our disobedience and gave us Your Son, Christ Jesus, who was rejected by all of us on the cross and took the punishment we deserve. Send us Your Holy Spirit so that we come to Jesus’ supper in true faith, not doubting, but trusting that we receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Hear us then as we pray the prayer He gave us . . .

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord and Pax Domini (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

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

Distribution of Holy Communion: (8:30) * **Strings Ensemble** – “*The Heavens Resound*”

“*Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*” - **Hymn # 451**

“*We Sing the Praise of Him Who Died*” - **Hymn # 429**

Song After Communion: “*Grant Peace We Pray, in Mercy Lord*” - **Hymn #777**

Prayer After Communion:

P: Almighty God, our Redeemer, in our weakness we have failed to be Your messengers of forgiveness and hope in the word. Renew us by Your Holy Spirit, that we may follow Your commands and proclaim Your reign of love, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*Glory Be to Jesus*” - **Hymn #433**