

Order of Worship for September 21, 2025

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “We Praise You, O God”- Hymn #785

Confession and Forgiveness p. 151

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Let my cry come before You, O LORD;

C: give me understanding according to Your word!

P: Let my plea come before You;

C: deliver me according to Your word.

P: My lips will pour forth praise,

C: for You teach me your statutes.

P: My tongue will sing of Your word,

C: for all Your commandments are right.

P: Let Your hand be ready to help me,

C: for I have chosen Your precepts.

P: I long for your salvation, O LORD,

C: and Your law is my delight.

P: Let my soul live and praise You,

C: and let Your just decrees help me.

P: I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek Your servant,

C: for I do not forget Your commandments.

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: Let my cry come before You, O LORD;

C: give me understanding according to Your word!

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy): pages 152-3

Hymn of Praise: (*This Is the Feast*) page 155

Salutation: page 156

Prayer of the Day:

P: Lord Jesus, You are the Good Shepherd, without whom nothing is secure. Rescue and preserve us that we may not be lost forever but follow You, rejoicing in the way that leads to eternal life; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Reading – Micah 7:18-20

R: Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Reading – 1 Timothy 1:5-17

R: The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

I thank Him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because He judged me faithful, appointing me to His service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse p. !56

Holy Gospel – Luke 15:1-10

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 15th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear [Jesus]. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

So Jesus told them this parable: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost,

until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C. Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)

Sermon Hymn: "Immortal, Invisible, God only Wise" - Hymn #802

Sermon: "Rules and Regulations" - 1 Timothy 1:5-17

"Tesla" is not only the name of a company that makes electric cars. The company was named after the man who developed AC electricity which powers our homes. But it is also the name of a Canadian rock group whose most famous song is called "Signs." Here are the lyrics to that song:

*And the sign says "Long-haired freaky people need not apply"
So I put my hair under my hat and I went in to ask him why
He said, "You look like a fine outstanding young man, I think you do"
So I took off my hat, I said, "Imagine that, huh, me working for you", oh
Signs, signs, everywhere there's signs
Messing up the scenery, breaking my mind
Do this, don't do that
Can't you read the sign?
And the sign says "Anybody caught trespassing will be shot on sight"
So I jumped the fence and I yelled at the house
"Hey! What gives you the right
To put up a fence and keep me out
Or to keep Mother Nature in?
If God was here, He'd tell it to your face
Man, you're some kind of sinner"
Oh, I say now, "Mister, can't you read?"
You got to have a shirt and tie to get a seat
You can't watch, no, you can't eat
You ain't supposed to be here
And the sign says, "You got to have a membership card to get inside"
Huh!
And the sign says "Everybody, welcome, come in, kneel down and pray"
But then they passed around a plate at the end of it all
And I didn't have a penny to pay
So I got me a pen and a paper
And I made up my own sign*

*I said, "Thank you, Lord, for thinking about me
I'm alive and doing fine", oh*

The song expresses the desire that young people can have for freedom from rules and regulations. Isn't that one of the reasons to go off to college, so you can get away from being always told what to do and how to do it?

St. Paul seems to agree with that sentiment in Timothy:

For the Law not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the glorious gospel of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted.

Think of how Jesus defied the rules and regulations of His time. He let unclean people touch Him. He shared meals with people who had a bad reputation. He healed people on the Sabbath. So why not get rid of the rules and regulations, except for the really bad?

Think of our world without rules and regulations. Try playing a game of basketball where there are no rules. You could be hacked and fouled all over the place and nothing would be done about it even if you are playing against Iowa State. Tesla could sing its song about "Signs" and not receive any money for it because there are no copyright laws. A college degree would be totally useless because there would be no grade to know if you really passed the classes. We could eat unlimited amounts of tainted food, take unsafe drugs, and drive in dangerous cars without anyone getting into trouble.

No, we need rules and regulations because we live in a sinful world. The problem is that we want rules and regulations to favor "me." If the law means that my team gets the interference call to set up a touchdown, if someone else's insurance pays for my car to be repaired, if my property is properly protected, or if doctors aren't giving me unsafe drugs, then I like those laws. But if those same laws help the opposing team, force my car insurance to go up, force me to pay higher taxes for my property, or keep me from receiving a medicine that may help me, then I don't want them.

A classic example is rules and regulations about abortion. Most people say abortion is wrong. There are plenty of people who want to adopt children. But they aren't so sure about laws against it because they may need abortion as a "back up" plan.

It was the case in Jesus' day. A whole group of people called the "Pharisees" (Paul had been one of them) made themselves powerful and popular by observing all kinds of laws they felt were based on their religion. As people of wealth and influence, they could obey these laws in ways common people could not. For instance, they could hire people to do the "dirty work" that would make them unclean. On the other hand, Paul shared the Gospel with people

in the pagan world who did not want the rules and regulations God gave in the Old Testament, like not having sexual relations outside of marriage, telling the truth, and not swindling other people.

When the Gospel is shared to people in Eastern cultures, they think of “sinners” as being those who break the laws—criminals. Since they haven’t been convicted of any crimes, they do not see themselves as sinners who have broken God’s laws.

What we have to see is that when Paul said “the law is not for the righteous,” the “righteous” did not mean most people. This is Paul writing to Timothy. Paul proclaimed that all have sinned and fall short of God, that we are justified by God’s grace through faith in Christ Jesus. The “righteous” are Christians who do not need the law because they have been forgiven by the blood of Jesus. Paul is exactly right—the law was laid down because of sin. Because we sin, we need rules and regulations to hold sin in check. But even more we need it to help point us to Jesus.

Then as forgiven people we are led not by law or to subvert the law. Those things we would do to turn things to our advantage and pretend that we are in charge of our own destiny. Instead, we live “in the law,” as people who want to do what God says is best for us and others.

Paul puts it this way in his words to Timothy:

The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life.

Paul, who persecuted Christians, was forgiven by Jesus. That is why he called himself the foremost of sinners. The rules and regulations show us that we too are sinners. Sinners are those for whom Jesus died. So, our words and actions aren’t done to follow the rules and be saved, but as forgiven people whom God uses to show His love to others as we follow His commands. That is what it means to be “righteous.”

Rules and regulations—as a sinner we need them. But even more we need what only God can give in Jesus—the forgiveness of our sins. Then we can join with Paul in saying, “To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Creed: Close of the Commandments

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering & Voluntary

Offertory: *“What Shall I Render to the Lord?”* pages 159-60

Service of the Sacrament

Preface: pg. 160

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, almighty God, heavenly Father for You have given us laws and authorities to hold back the effects of our sins, but even more to show us how lost we are without 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. 161

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You, O God, King of all creation for You have given us Your law to show us what You expect in our lives, but we give You the greatest praise for sending Your Son, Christ Jesus, to rescue us lost in our failure to live according to Your law. Send Your Holy Spirit to us now as we come to Jesus' altar to receive His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. All this we pray as he taught us to pray . . .

Lord's Prayer and Words of our Lord: page 162

Pax Domini ((Peace of the Lord) and Agnus Dei (Lamb of God) page 163

Distribution Hymns: *“Jesus Sinners Doth Receive”* –Hymn #609

“What is the World to Me?” – Hymn #730

Song After Communion: *“Thank the Lord”* page 164

Prayer After Communion:

P: Lord God, You call us to use wisely what You have given to us. Set our hearts 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.

Blessing: page 166

Closing Hymn: *“You are the Way; through You Alone”* - Hymn #526

Postlude: