

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt  
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost - Year A  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Jeremiah 28:5-9  
Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18  
Romans 6:12-23  
Matthew 10:40-42  
07/02/2023

### **Gospel**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew:

[Jesus said to the twelve:] 40“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

The Gospel of Our Lord

### **Prayer**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

### **Water**

Good morning! Growing up if you wanted to go to the beach you drove to Myrtle Beach, SC. Sure, some people went to Virginia Beach, but in Ohio and West Virginia that just never felt far enough south. I was thinking of the absurdity of that thought as I was cutting the grass yesterday in 90 degree weather. Anyplace this hot is surely far enough south. And it was

with great satisfaction that I would return to my water bottle, full of ice cold relief, to get a little break. It reminded me of how when we were all younger we would grab a quick drink from the hose when we were outside playing, and for some reason that drink felt like the absolute best water that ever existed.

To Jesus, even offering something as simple as a cup of cool water will receive a reward. Our very short text is rich with a message about hospitality and how we should treat others. If you remember my sermon from Holy Trinity Sunday about a month ago, which I'm sure you all do, you might remember that I talked about how the Trinity is a Holy relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And in God's infinite grace we are invited to participate in that special love, to "dance" with God too. In our Gospel lesson we see the evidence of exactly that: *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."*

The short section today at the end of chapter 10 in Matthew ends the same way it began, discussing the ministry that the disciples will embark on. The chapter begins by naming the 12 disciples, then continues with a mission from Jesus: *"<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'<sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment."*<sup>1</sup> The whole chapter is in essence a guide book for how to behave when sharing the Good News. The message being that when we minister to others we do so with God's

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 10:5-8 NRSV

blessing and power behind us. But the opposite is also true. Every second of our lives as Christians is one where our actions and words can either build up or tear down God's work. We are ambassadors for Christ! Everywhere we go! Think of us like celebrities, the cameras are always around waiting for us to slip up, because that's the message the world will hear most loudly.

It's also a reminder that each and every single person is deserving of God's love and attention. The way we treat even the smallest or least significant individual is reflective of our relationship with God. Douglas R.A. Hare writes that *"The little ones,' ... is a phrase used by Matthew with reference to humble Christians who are not church leaders and who may also be poor. Such persons must not be neglected or treated with disdain, because they too represent Christ. The fact that even the trifling gift of a cup of cold water to one of the little ones will be richly rewarded is ample proof of their importance in God's plan."*<sup>2</sup>

It's been a while since I've done this, so what I would like you to do is talk for a few minutes with the person you are sitting with and answer one or both of these questions:

1. What is something simple, like giving a cup of water to someone in need, that you could begin doing in your life to extend God's hospitality to others?
2. Who are the "little ones" in our world that we often forget or don't notice? Do you have a story of a time you realized that the world neglected or shunned these people?

After about 5 minutes I'll finish with a few final thoughts.

We like to imagine that our actions stand alone, or that we're some self autonomous individual. But this just isn't the case. Our scripture today

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<sup>2</sup> Hare, Douglas R. *Matthew*. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009. p. 119.

shows us the way that we are all connected. How we treat any and all people reflects on not just us, but everything we represent. We come together in this place to be reminded of the mark that God has left upon us all, to be fed by the Spirit for the journey ahead, walking on a journey that works to bring God's good news to all the world. So, let us step with our best foot forward, going with God's blessing, and being blessed by those whom we meet along the way. Amen.