



God is “rich in mercy” (Eph 2:4) and “abounding in merciful love” (Ex 34:6). The enormity of God’s mercy drove Saint Paul to his knees, fervently praying that others, too, might “have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge” (Eph 3:18–19). Such love and mercy stirred the souls of God’s Old Testament people as well, who exulted: “As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. . . . The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” (Ps 103:11, 17).

At the same time, the Bible teaches that all humanity will face a final judgment before God, and that apart from Jesus Christ there is no escape from the divine wrath that is coming upon the world because of human sin and wickedness. It is often noted that contemporary Western culture rejects this idea that God punishes. In a cultural setting like this, clearly the church must proclaim—and the church must clearly proclaim—the truth about God’s holiness and judgment. Without the preaching of the law, there is no real awareness of the need for and nature of the gospel.

But there is another, perhaps less obvious, challenge. Yes, the world around us casually acknowledges that God is loving and merciful, at least to the extent that God is acknowledged at all. However, we must not assume, regarding the gospel, that it is therefore obvious and easily known. The love of God *in Jesus Christ* is no generic, ordinary kind of love. The mercy of God for sinners *in Jesus Christ* is no everybody-knows-that kind of mercy.

# Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

February 20, 2022

## INTROIT

*Psalm 37:1-5; Antiphon: Psalm 37:7a,b*

*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.  
Fret not yourself because of evildoers;  
be not envious of wrongdoers!  
For they will soon fade like the grass  
and wither like the green herb.  
Trust in the LORD, and do good;  
dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.  
Delight yourself in the LORD,  
and he will give you the desires of your heart.  
Commit your way to the LORD;  
trust in him, and he will act.*

**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.**

*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him;  
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way.*

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**P** *O God,  
the strength of all who put their trust in You,  
mercifully grant that by Your power  
we may be defended against all adversity;  
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.*

**G** *♪[Amen]♪*

## GRADUAL

*Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8*

*Praise the LORD, all nations!  
Extol him, all peoples!  
For great is his steadfast love toward us,  
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.  
Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;  
bring an offering, and come into his courts!*

## RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

*After each petition:*

**P** *Lord, in Your mercy,*      **G** **hear our prayer.**

## Genesis 45:3-15 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> And Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence. <sup>4</sup> So Joseph said to his brothers, "Come near to me, please." And they came near. And he said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. <sup>5</sup> And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. <sup>6</sup> For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. <sup>7</sup> And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. <sup>8</sup> So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. <sup>9</sup> Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; do not tarry. <sup>10</sup> You shall dwell in the land of

Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, and your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. <sup>11</sup> There I will provide for you, for there are yet five years of famine to come, so that you and your household, and all that you have, do not come to poverty.' <sup>12</sup> And now your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth that speaks to you. <sup>13</sup> You must tell my father of all my honor in Egypt, and of all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here."

<sup>14</sup> Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept upon his neck. <sup>15</sup> And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them. After that his brothers talked with him.

## 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup> But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who

### SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Genesis 45:3-15

1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42

Luke 6:27-38

*As the Son of God Is Merciful and Forgives Your Sins, You Also Be Merciful and Forgive*

Your inheritance as a child of Adam is sin and death, but in Christ you are made alive through His resurrection from the dead (1 Cor. 15:21-22). As you have died with Him in Holy Baptism, so are you raised with Him to newness of life. Therefore, "*do not go on sinning*" (1 Cor. 15:34). Instead of serving your desires and harming your neighbors, live as "*sons of the Most High,*" and "*be merciful, even as your Father is merciful*" (Luke 6:35-36). Deal with others as you would have others deal with you (Luke 6:31, 37-38). As Christ loved you when you were at enmity with Him, as He blessed and prayed for those who abused Him, and as He did good to those who hated Him and hurt Him, so also "*love your enemies, do good*" (Luke 6:27-29, 35). For God sent His Son to bear the cross and suffer death, not to condemn the guilty, but "*to preserve life.*" So does He provide a place for you within His Church, where He is near and deals kindly with "*you and your children and your children's children*" (Gen. 45:5-10).

belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

<sup>30</sup> Why are we in danger every hour? <sup>31</sup> I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day! <sup>32</sup> What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." <sup>33</sup> Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals." <sup>34</sup> Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame. <sup>35</sup> But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" <sup>36</sup> You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. <sup>37</sup> And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. <sup>38</sup> But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

<sup>39</sup> For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. <sup>40</sup> There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. <sup>41</sup> There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. <sup>42</sup> So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

## Luke 6:27-38 (ESV)

<sup>27</sup> [Jesus said:] "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. <sup>29</sup> To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. <sup>31</sup> And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. <sup>32</sup> "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. <sup>33</sup> And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. <sup>34</sup> And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. <sup>35</sup> But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. <sup>36</sup> Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. <sup>37</sup> "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; <sup>38</sup> give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

### *Next Week's Readings from God's Word:*

February 27: The Transfiguration of our Lord (Series C):  
Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Hebrews 3:1-6; Luke 9:28-36