

A Mission Congregation of the ELCA
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
P. O. Box 64 - 8520 Oakes Rd - Pittsburg, Ohio 45358

Sermon Series on the Book of 2 Corinthians
Week 5
August 9, 2020



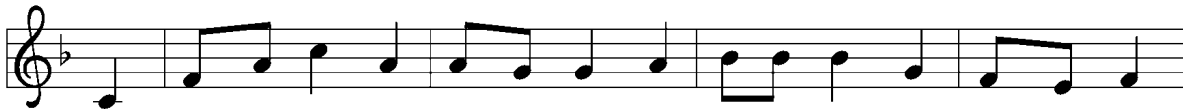
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- **Prelude** “Praise Him, Praise Him; Pass It On; I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; He Is Lord; Whisper A Prayer” Roxanne Groff

- **Office of the Acolyte and Ringing of the Bell**

- **Welcome** **Pr Mel**

* **HYMN OF PRAISE** “My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less”



- 1 My hope is built on noth - ing less than Je - sus' blood and righ - teous - ness;
- 2 When dark - ness veils his love - ly face, I rest on his un - chang - ing grace;
- 3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sus - tain me in the rag - ing flood;
- 4 When he shall come with trum - pet sound, oh, may I then in him be found,



no mer - it of my own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 in ev - 'ry high and storm - y gale my an - chor holds with - in the veil.
 when all sup - ports are washed a - way, he then is all my hope and stay.
 clothed in his righ - teous - ness a - lone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain



On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; all oth - er ground is



sink - ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

* **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: We confess our sins before God and one another.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Loving God,

C: When our path becomes difficult, we do not always turn to you. We look

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for an easy way out. We escape in avoidance and addiction. We forget your promises and seek what does not satisfy. Forgive us and bring us back into the strength of your Spirit.

P: God is generous and loving and forgiving. Hear and believe that your sins are washed away and that new life is yours through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

*** GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Generous God, You call us to share what we have been given. Open us to the needs of others that we might be blessed through our giving, through Jesus Christ,

C: Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

P: Our scripture reading for this morning is from 2 Corinthians, Chapter 8.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

8 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; ²for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. ³For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, ⁴begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— ⁵and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, ⁶so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you.

⁷Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. ⁸I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but

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even to desire to do something—¹¹now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹²For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between ¹⁴your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵As it is written, “The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Praise To You, O Christ** (*Spoken*)

- **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

Pr Mel Musser

- **SERMON**

Pr Mel Musser

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who demonstrated God’s grace, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

Today’s theme is generosity. Generosity is the natural outcome of what I call the circle of God’s Grace. As we continue reading through Second Corinthians, we come to this section in chapters 8 and 9 where Paul talks about his collection project he’s taking up for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. In these 2 chapters Paul uses the Greek word for grace 6 times. Apparently he thinks grace has something to do with giving and generosity. For Paul, this isn’t just an important project, it’s crucial to the survival of this new fledgling religion called Christianity. It’s not that the poor in Jerusalem are any more important than the Christians in Asia, Macedonia, or Corinth for that matter. They were no poorer or any more persecuted for their faith than Christians elsewhere. What makes the

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poor Christians in Jerusalem so different that Paul takes up a special collection, not just in Corinth, but from his churches in Macedonia, Thessalonica, and Galatia?

The difference is sort of baked in... Christians from all the outlying areas were largely Gentile converts to Christianity. They had never been Jewish first, then converted to Christianity. The Christians in Jerusalem, on the other hand, were Jewish first, then converts to Christianity. This means in the early Church, right from the get go, there was diversity, discord, and conflict. Questions about the ethics of eating food sacrificed to idols, or the foods that were forbidden in the Jewish Old Testament or the all-important question of circumcision were constant sources of controversy. Underlying these questions was a basic doctrinal debate: before one can become a Christian, must one first become a Jew? This controversy threatened to divide the early Church and led to the calling of the first Churchwide Assembly. James, Brother of Jesus, Peter and the rest of the disciples, including Paul, all met in Jerusalem. Paul had been ruffling the feathers of the disciples by converting Gentiles directly into Christianity. The upshot of this council was Christians could indeed come directly into the Church without first being circumcised into the Jewish faith. Another important outcome was for the first time Peter and the rest, recognized Christians did not need to be circumcised, nor do they have to abstain from food offered to idols or other dietary restrictions

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stemming from the Old Testament laws. As with any negotiation, there's always some give and take. Paul agreed to remember the poor of Jerusalem as he went about his missionary work. In the book of Acts Paul says he agreed to the collection because he had precisely that in mind anyway... If Paul already had this collection in mind before it became a part of the deal worked out in Jerusalem, why was it so important to Paul from the beginning. The answer is, as I said, baked in... He knew the differences between the Jewish and Gentile Christians was significant and would destroy the Church if left unchecked. What better way of uniting these two differing groups than through a collection of money. Jesus famously said where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Through this collection, Paul was establishing the Jewish Christians in the hearts of Christians from all over the known world. Through this collection God would not only help the actual poor folks in Jerusalem, but God would also heal the division between the Gentile and the Jewish converts to Christianity.

By this time, the Jewish Christians already thought they were superior to their Gentile brothers and sisters in Christ. They lorded it over their heads every chance they got. As a result, there was a good deal of animosity among the Gentile Christians toward the Jewish Christians. Presenting formerly Gentile Christians an

opportunity to help the poor in Jerusalem allowed them to feel good about themselves and show the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem they were their equals.

In the Church in Macedonia the folks were enthusiastic to give to Paul's cause, but in Corinth it wasn't easy to convince the Gentile converts to give generously. In Corinth, Paul had already introduced this collection project during the first 18 months while he was living among them. Then, after he left, the Corinthians fell victim to a false teacher. Paul sent his first letter to the Corinthians, then his friend Titus in person, then the letter known as the "letter of tears," and now this second Corinthian letter. God still speaks to us through Paul's account of this collection project. There are several truths we can still learn about giving, generosity, and God's grace.

Gratitude flows from an attitude that all life is a gift from God. If one sees life as a total gift, you begin to have a greater appreciation for every breath you take. If everything is a gift from God, then saying Grace before meals and thanking God for our food becomes habit. It's just what we do. The same is true with giving our offering. When we think of everything we have as a gift from God, then giving some back to God seems like the least we can do.

I said earlier gratitude flows from the unending circle of God's Grace. The Disney movie *The Lion King* has this great song called the Circle of Life. Grace

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also consists of a completed circle. God first loved you. The first part of the definition of Grace is God's unmerited love. God's love isn't contingent on you loving him or obeying your parents or living by a certain set of laws and regulations. God loves you because that's what God does. You might have heard this someplace before... God is love! The second part of the circle of Grace involves giving. God loved you so much that God gave. God gave us a wonderful world with so much abundance we could feed every man, woman, and child several times over. God gave us plenty of water to drink and air to breath. God gave us the beauty of creation and eyes to see it. God gave us our senses to feel, taste, see, hear, and smell how wonderful this creation is. Thank God for so many things to taste, see, smell, touch, and feel! My point is that God loved and so, God gave. The third part of Grace is that we receive. If you eat or drink, you're receiving God's Grace. If you breath, you have just breathed in God's Grace. It really has little to do with accepting Jesus as God's gift of salvation. Jesus is that gift and the sinner can't stop God from giving it any more than you can hold their breath to stop receiving God's gift of the breath of life. So, Grace starts with God's unmerited love, God's gifts of life, and our receiving those gifts. In response to all the abundant gifts God gives, and out of great thanksgiving and gratitude, we're invited to thank God by sharing God's love with others. Because

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God loved and gave, we received and responded back to God in love. That completes the circle, from God, to us, and back to God. Grateful people, thankful people are by definition generous people. Generous people are natural givers who give because of the love they have received. Why were the Macedonian Christians able to give so much when they were in such abject poverty? They recognized, even in their poverty, they had been given so much from God's endless supply of Grace.

I also want to say a few words to address real and practical aspects of modern giving in the Church. Christians give to the Church for two basic reasons, out of both duty and joy. We give out of a sense of duty because the Church has expenses. If you belong to the YMCA, you pay a certain amount every month or you don't get to use the nice clean pool. The same goes for the Church. Of course, there's more to Christian giving than simple duty to keep the doors open. We give because we love the God who created us and who sustains the world and everything in it for our enjoyment. The giving that goes above and beyond duty becomes our joy. It works something like this. I really love PJ. I love to see her smile. It gives me joy when she's happy and because I love her so much, I want to say and do things to make her happy. Sometimes I might want to sit on the couch and binge watch Marvel's the Avengers movies, but I know she really wants to get

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our spare room fixed up into her sewing and craft room. So, I get my lazy self, off the couch, and put her craft table, desk, bookcase and storage shelves together.

Knowing the one you love is happy to receive your gift of time, talents, or treasures creates in us the joy of giving. When you give up something you really want in favor of doing good for another, that's called a sacrificial gift. Sacrificial gifts begin where duty and obligation leave off. You'll never feel the joy of giving if all you ever do is your duty and no more. Real joy comes from making sacrificial gifts and knowing the one you love experienced the joy of your love.

May we always find meaningful and important ways to use the collections we raise through our offering. May God continue to bless our Church. May your heart be filled with gratitude for all the wonderful gifts you've received through the circle of God's unending Grace. May your gratitude overflow with generosity and always include both duty and joy. Amen.

Silence for reflection may follow

*** APOSTLES' CREED**

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

➤ *Or, He descended to the dead.*

*** PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

P: We pray for the church, the world, and all those in need...

A brief silence.

L: Your people are woven into a web of interdependence, where one's surplus may supply another's lack, and where there is always more than enough to go around. Guard us from the smallness of hoarding what we have and losing sight of all the true blessings in life. Open out eyes to see all of life as gifts from your grace. Give us glad and generous hearts filled with love for you and for our neighbors. God of plenty,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: When those in one part of the world are suffering, your people in other places respond in love. Continue to connect us in this unity, which is motivated by your Spirit's compassion. God of plenty,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Enlighten us by nature's balance between light and dark, growth and dormancy, death and rebirth, and teach us to appreciate the changing and complementary seasons of our lives, whether they be marked by abundance or scarcity. Help us to be satisfied with what we have and never envious of others. God of plenty,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: It is easy to turn inward when we believe we do not have enough to survive or thrive. Expand our hearts with gratitude for all the intangible joys of life: health, happiness, and love. We ask for your Holy Wisdom for all medical and Scientific personnel who are working to cure the Covid 19 virus and those creating and testing the various vaccines. Give the gift of your peace to all who

are suffering from the effects of this Pandemic. We especially ask you to send your Spirit's blessing to those who need it this day, including... God of plenty,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Reminders of life's fragility are all around us, urging us both to treasure the time we have on this earth and use it to your glory. Unite us with those who have preceded us in faith and life, and make their lives shine as examples before us of how to live as your devoted children. God of plenty,

C: Hear our prayer.

Here other petitions may be offered.

L: We belong to you, O God, and that is enough. Hold all our prayers in your safekeeping and awaken us to live the lives to which you are calling us, in Jesus Christ,

C: Amen.

*** SHARING OF THE PEACE**

(The Sharing of the Peace that began when the congregation arrived is now shared with the Pastor at this time...)

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

• OFFERING

*** OFFERING PRAYER**

P: Bountiful God, accept and bless these gifts we bring before your altar, that our abundance may supply the need of others, and as a result our joy might be overflowing, in the power of the Spirit,

C: Amen.

*** THE LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Jesus is the "tie that Binds us together", let us pray as Jesus taught...

C: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

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*** SENDING BLESSING**

P: Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love.

C: Amen.

*** SENDING HYMN “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”**



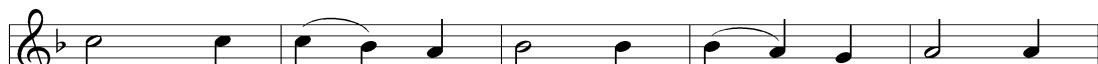
1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to
 3 Come, Al - mighty, to de - liv - er; let us
 4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and



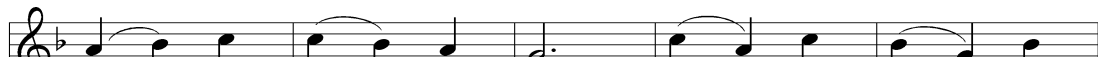
heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us thy
 ev - 'ry trou - bled breast; let us all in
 all thy life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re -
 spot - less let us be; let us see thy



hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy faith - ful mer - cies crown.
 thee in - her - it; let us find thy prom - ised rest.
 turn, and nev - er, nev - er - more thy tem - ples leave.
 great sal - va - tion per - fect - ly re - stored in thee!



Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion, pure, un -
 Take a - way the love of sin - ning; Al - pha
 Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing, serve thee
 Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry, till in



bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
 and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
 as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
 heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
 its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
 with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
 crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

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*** DISMISSAL**

P: Depart in Christ's Love.

C: Seeking, welcoming, and serving all. Amen!

Postlude

"Now's the Time"

Roxanne Groff

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Trinity Worship Assistants and Staff

Ministers	All the People of Trinity
Lector	N/A
Acolyte	N/A
Organist	Roxanne Groff
Greeters	Dean Thompson
Parrish Nurse	PJ Musser
Custodian	Mark Groff
Secretary	Sharon Fourman
FaceBook Live Recorder	PJ Musser

Health Tips for the Week

BODY: Take a Hike

MIND: Limit time on Social Media

SPIRIT: Visit a Christian Book Store



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Trinity is on the Air at FM 88.3

If you are near the Church on Sunday morning, you can tune in to FM 88.3 at 10:30 AM and hear the sermon from your car.

This Week @ Trinity – August 9 thru August 16, 2020

Sun, August 9

10:30 am Worship Service

Wed, August 12

6:30 pm Christian Education Team Meeting

Fri, August 14

3:30 pm FISH Pantry @ 400 Markwith, Greenville OH

Sun, August 16

10:30 am Worship Service



Scripture readings for next Sunday, August 16th
Luke 11:2-4



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

is Tuesday, August 18th.

Please email your news to
secretary@pitsburgtlc.org

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THE GIVING TREE

Our Giving Tree inside still has crosses with ideas for items to donate. Open the cross and take the paper with you or take the cross and return it when you drop off your donations. The basket under the tree also has items inside most of the crosses.

The baskets in the corner behind the tree are marked for either WERNLE or WELCA donations. Put your bags in the baskets to help keep the area neat as possible. We will try to remove your donations ASAP.

THANK YOU!

We're making School Kits for Lutheran World Relief!

If you don't feel like doing the shopping, Linda Baker says she loves to shop (and Tony affirms how much she loves it 😊). Linda has offered and will be happy to accept any donations. She will purchase what is most needed to make the maximum number of school kits with what donations she receives. If you're like Linda and love to shop, here's the list that goes into a kit:

- 1 - Sturdy drawstring backpack style cloth bag— approximately 14" X 17", w/shoulder straps (handmade)
- 1 - Ruler—30 cm on one side (May have inches on the other side.)
- 1 - Box of Crayons (16 or 24)
- 5 - Unsharpened Pencils w/Eraser
- 1 - Pencil Sharpener
- 1 - 2 1/2" Eraser
- 1 - Pair Blunt Scissors
- 5 - Blue or Black Ball point Pens (No GEL pens)
- 4 - 70 Sheet College or Wide ruled Notebooks



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