

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 24, 2023

Leading in Worship Today

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor: *John D. Jordan* AV Director: *Marie Stiles*
Pianist: *Laurie Knapp* AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*

Prelude
Call To Worship *“Come! Come! Everybody Worship”* Laurie Knapp
Choir

Greeting
*Hymn *“Morning Has Broken”* 145

“Let the Children Come!”
(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children’s Church.)

Opening Prayer
The Lord’s Prayer 895

Proclamation of the Word

Prayer of Illumination

Old Testament Reading Exodus 16:2-15 Page 62 (O.T.)
Psalter Psalm 105:1-11 828
*Hymn *“Grace Greater than Our Sin”* 365

Epistle Reading Philippians 1:21-30 Page 187 (N.T.)

Anthem *“O How He Loves You and Me”* Choir

Gospel Reading Matthew 20:1-16 Pages 25-26 (N.T.)
Sermon *“Unentitled Grace”* Rev. John Jordan

*Affirmation of Faith *“The Apostles’ Creed”* 881
*Gloria Patri *“Glory Be to the Father”* 70

Pastoral Prayer

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory
*Doxology *“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”* Laurie Knapp
95

*Hymn *“O Jesus, I Have Promised”* 396

*Dismissal With Benediction
*Benediction Response *“Go Now in Peace”* Choir

*Postlude Laurie Knapp

*The Congregation May Stand

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

A Gift to Trinity is Given to the Glory of God and in celebration of the marriage of Brandon and Kelsey Jones, with lots of love by “E” Heiting.

“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...

Patsy Zeigler Becky Derrick Carlis Edwards Dale Wells Patsy Shuler Christopher McCroskey
Jimmy Grahl Latson Lewis Kaye Floyd John Ballentine Jack Stevens Dolly Pearson

Shut-Ins: Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

Family and Friends: Alex Courtney (friend of great nephew of Joyce Robinson); Lawrence Gilbert (friend of Becky Derrick); Bob Bohnstengel (spouse of Jo Ann Heiting's cousin); Judy Spence (former member); Anne Piercy (former member); Missy Abrams (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); Mary Davis (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); Kathleen Braun (sister of Mark Lewis); Lauren & Leah Grace Edwards (granddaughter & great-granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); Gloria Erd (friend of Lynn Martin); Pearl Geddens (mother of Tom Geddens); Beverly Lipscomb (sister-in-law of John Jordan); Ross Deal (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); Nancy Wilson (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); David Turner (brother of Pam Turner); Chip Mixon (friend of Tommy Gleaton); Ron Walker (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); Merit Takach (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); James Boggs (father of Claire Boggs); Stacy Coggins (daughter of Steve Aiello); Dan & Leslie White (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); Sweat Family (friends of Marty Johnson); Alva Humphries (friend of Marty Johnson); Bill Areheart (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); David Grandshaw (brother-in-law of Edwa Meek); Hayley Beaudoin (niece of Edwa Meek); Addie Kinard (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); Robert Bradley (Business Associate of Simon Ross); Gary Becton (friend of Mark Branham); Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller (friends of Chris Derrick); Adrin & Linda Hargett (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); Alexa Lookingbill, Teddy Derrick (uncle of Arvan Derrick); Haidee Baehr (friends of Ruth Frady); Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson (cousins of Gale Frady); Dan Conner, Max Johnson (friends of Gale Frady); Bernardo Velasquez, Walt & Janet Beck (friends of Jo Ann Heiting); Adam Lavender (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 09/17 SS: 18 Worship: 38

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 09/17 \$ 3,022.34 Epworth Work Day Offering YTD \$ 803.00

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

Today Taste of Trinity

09/25 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

09/27 T.a.G., 7 p.m.

09/28 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

09/29 Office Closed

09/30 FH Reserved

Readings for October 1

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 78

Philippians 2:1-13

Matthew 21:23-32



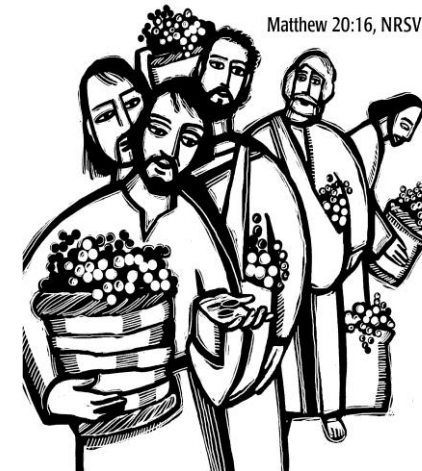
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Jesus Christ

aspire and

So the last
will be FIRST,
and the
first
will be LAST.

Matthew 20:16, NRSV



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Website: www.trinityumcwc.org



You're Invited
October 1 Following Worship

Attention: All Ladies of Trinity

You are invited to *shower* Baby Elijah, son of Brady and Jasmin, with gifts and love and welcome him to our Trinity Family.

- Date:** Sunday, October 1st
- Time:** Following Worship
- Place:** Trinity United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
- RSVP:** Bonnie Ramsey (803) 260-2283
- Registry:** www.babylist.com



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KILLINGSWORTH GALA
Thursday, November 9
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

The Killingsworth Gala is back! The Gala will be held Thursday, November 9, 2023, at Seawell's Restaurant. If purchased individually, tickets are \$65 per person. A table of eight is \$500 or \$62.50 per person. A sign-up sheet will be in the Gathering Area. We would like to be able to have a table for eight. Once we know how many will attend, your check can be made out to Trinity and given to Marie Stiles.

Killingsworth is a home for women in transition from homelessness, addictions, or incarceration. Killingsworth is an Advance Special Ministry of the South Carolina Conference and does not receive funding from apportionments



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Matthew 20: 1-16

We hear a lot about entitlement today. People think they are entitled because of who they are, how much money they do or don't have, their politics, or social standing. I am tired of hearing people talk about being entitled.

The reason I feel that way is most people misunderstand entitlement. I worked as a social worker for many years. Social programs come in two types: entitlement programs and need-based programs. An entitlement program is one in which a person receives a benefit because of what they have done. Social Security is an entitlement program because one pays into the Social Security system. The amount one receives depends upon how much they pay into the system. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program are need-based programs. One receives these benefits because of their need. One is not entitled to these programs, they are eligible because of their need.

You are probably asking, "What does all this talk about social programs have to do with today's lesson?" When we look at this parable, you could easily say those first workers were entitled. They worked all day in the hot sun. They should have gotten paid more! They were entitled! Some only worked one hour and they got the same pay! This is so wrong.

Yes, it is wrong if we are talking about an entitlement program. This parable is not about an entitlement program but the Kingdom of Heaven.

Two things Jesus points to in this parable are grace and eternal reward. Grace is needed to get the eternal reward. What we misunderstand about grace and the eternal reward is there are no amounts or degrees.

The disciples may have had this same misunderstanding. In the passage before this one, Jesus was approached by a rich young man. The young man asked Jesus what good deed he must do to have eternal life. The young man told Jesus that he kept all of the commandments.

The young man may have thought he was entitled to eternal life because he was rich. The theology of the day was that a sign of a person's place in heaven was their earthly blessings. Being rich was a sign of how much grace God had bestowed upon them.

We hear that theology in the prosperity gospel that is popular today. God is going to bestow you with Armani Suits and Mercedes-Benz if you are truly following him. If that is the case then I haven't gotten much grace because my suit is off the rack at Dillard's and I drive a used Chevy Trax.

When I took Sociological Theory in college, one of the lectures was "Calvinism and the Protestant Work Ethic." The professor's point was that the Protestant work ethic came out of the Calvinistic belief in predestination. How does one know they are predestined for heaven? They are blessed by God and have riches. So, one works hard to obtain more riches to prove that they are going to heaven.

But the young man's riches were not going to get him into heaven. Neither is our wealth going to get us into heaven.

The young man did say that he had kept all the commandments. That should have counted for something to get him into heaven. Jesus told him to sell his possessions, then come, follow him. Keeping the commandments was not enough to get the young man into heaven, for he could not give away what he had and follow Jesus.

Many people are like the young man. We think that if we keep all the commandments, follow all the rules, serve in the church, and be active church members, we will get into heaven. Many church members are not disciples and many disciples are not church members. Discipleship is following Jesus, not the rules.

After the young man leaves Peter asks, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?” Peter may be thinking, “We have been following Jesus all along, we must be going to get something special in heaven.” We are entitled to something special because we have left everything and followed you from the beginning.

We may have that same thought process. We may think the longer we have followed Jesus the more we are going to get in heaven. We are entitled to something special.

This brings us back to today’s parable. The landowner gives those who worked only one hour a denarius. One can imagine the ones who worked all day thinking, “One hour times ten, that is ten denarii!” They would get ten denarii if the landowner operated on an entitlement basis. The landowner does not operate on an entitlement basis. Those who were first hired agreed to work for a denarius and that is what they received. All the workers received the same reward regardless of how long they worked in the vineyard.

All who follow Jesus receive the same reward. All receive eternal life and there are no degrees of reward. We do not receive the reward because of what we have done or how long we have followed Jesus. We are not entitled to eternal life. Eternal life is given by God’s grace. By God’s grace, our sins are forgiven **and** we receive new life. By accepting God’s grace our sins are forgiven and God transforms us into the divine image. It does not matter if we accept God’s grace as a child or on our deathbed, we receive eternal life.

God’s grace is with us all our lives. According to Wesley, we are surrounded by prevenient grace from birth. When we become aware of our sin and need for grace, we receive justifying grace by which our sin is forgiven. We also receive sanctifying grace, which transforms us into the divine image and draws us closer to God.

In the parable, the landowner goes out to seek workers throughout the day. He doesn’t go out just in the morning, he even goes out at five o’clock! He hires those that no one else will hire. This is how God operates. God continually seeks workers for the Kingdom of Heaven, even the rejects. The workers accept the offer to work in the vineyard. We accept God’s grace and work for the Kingdom of Heaven.

We enter the Kingdom of Heaven when we recognize our need for grace and accept God’s gift of grace. The reward of eternal life is not because we are entitled to God’s grace, but because we need God’s grace.

If God’s grace is offered to us even on our deathbed, why should we accept God’s grace? Why not live our lives merrily along, then make a deathbed confession? We are going to get eternal life either way. That seems to be a valid argument except for one thing.

God's grace was given to the laborers when they were hired to work in the vineyard. Those hired first had the joy of working in the vineyard all day.

The reward of eternal life does not begin when the day is done, but when one accepts God's grace. The moment we are "hired" by God, eternal life begins.

I can only speak for myself. I was aware of God's presence with me at an early age, the age of the children here today. I never had a fall down on my knees and ask Jesus into my life moment. I always knew he was with me. My Sunday School teacher told Mom when I was eight that I was going to be a preacher. I have known the joy of working in the Kingdom of Heaven as a youth, college student, social worker, and now as a pastor.

When we accept God's grace we are saved to work in the Kingdom of Heaven. We work in God's vineyard. Working for the Kingdom of Heaven is difficult, frustrating, and, at times, maddening. But the joy of knowing and feeling God's presence and guidance is beyond words. We experience that joy for eternity.