St Matthews Service

Rev. Christopher LaBoube

September 06, 2020 14th Sunday after Pentecost

"Trust in the Lord with all our heart, and lean not on our own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will direct your path." (Proverbs 3:5-6)



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14th Sunday after Pentecost 6 September 2020



St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Mapleton, IA Ezekiel 33:7–9 / Psalm 32:1–7 / Romans 13:1–10 / Matthew 18:1–20

> Sermon Title: Forgive as God Forgave You Sermon Text: Matthew 18:1-6, 18-20

"Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our LORD Jesus Christ." (2 Tim. 1:2) Amen.

Last Sunday we talked about what God asks of us—to develop a humble spirit and to repent of sins and that God will forgive you of your sins. Let's keep looking at that key idea—humility as we talk about our Gospel lesson this morn-ing from Matthew 18.

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, 'Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵ Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea." (Matthew 18:1-6)

The disciples asked: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" The world asks a shorter version of this question: "Who is the greatest"? Why do people want to be the greatest? If others thought you were the greatest at something, what would they say? He was the greatest basketball player in high school. She was the greatest runner in college?

Why is it, though, that we rarely hear about someone being the greatest prayer? The greatest Bible reader? The greatest at Bible memory work? If sports or music are important, then why isn't the Bible or God equally—if not more important?

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"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Become like children. This doesn't mean you revert to rolling around on the floor, wearing a diaper and crying for people to feed you. Become like children. Develop a child-like faith in Jesus. We teach children this song: "The B-I -B-L-E // yes, that's the book for me // I stand alone // on the Word of God // the B-I-B-L-E."

As adults, why don't we have the same attitude about the Bible that we try to instill in our children? Jesus continues: *"Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* Whoever humbles himself like a child is THE GREATEST in the kingdom of heaven. Nowhere does it say in Scripture that being THE GREATEST baseball player will get you into heaven.

Jesus then adds a warning about causing others to stumble: ⁵ Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶ but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea."

If you cause a child to sin, it would be better for you to be thrown into the ocean to drown and die. That sounds pretty serious. If you cause a little one—someone of little faith—to sin, then "...*it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*" That's terrible.

Why does Jesus say that if you cause someone to sin, then you need to be drown in the depths of the ocean?²

Because causing anyone to sin is terrible. God hates ALL sin. Not just what you call "little white lies." ALL sin is despicable in God's eyes.

So how do you make someone sin? Lead that person down the wrong path. Teach that person that gossiping and slandering over social media, email and text messaging is acceptable. Hate a fellow Christian at church. That's how you lead someone to sin.

Of course, several verses later in Matthew 18, Jesus explains how we should reconcile with a brother or sister, who has sinned against you. ¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."

The process that Jesus gives us for reconciling with a brother or sister is straight forward. The problem is that we don't want do the hard work of acknowledging our sins—humbling ourselves and going to actually TALK to the person.

Instead, we take what we think is the easy route—don't talk to that person, who has wronged you. Instead, blast your dirty laundry all over the internet—let everyone know how that person has wronged you. Basically, talking with everyone else EXCEPT the actual person, who has sinned against you.

¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." OF course, I'd like to challenge you to actually do what the Bible says. Talk to the person directly, who has sinned against you. Don't spread slander and hate all over town.

If you try to talk to the person, but get nowhere, Jesus gives us more advice: "¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses."

Back in Deuteronomy (17:6 and 19:15), Moses explains that no one can be condemned to death or be accused of anything without there being at least two or three witnesses to prove the accusations. So, if you go and try to reconcile with your brother and he won't listen to you, Jesus tells us that you go back to your brother with two or three witnesses—as Moses prescribed.

It's best to remember the whole point of talking with your brother or sister in Christ is to reconcile the relationship. Unfortunately, I've seen to many people refuse to reconcile, and to spend the rest of their lives spreading their hate for someone else to all who will listen.

Along these lines is the terrible idea that the best way to deal with troublemakers in the church is to kick them out of the church and stone them to death! If I don't get my own way, then I'm going to destroy as much around as I can. If that means hurting a bunch of people along the way, then so be it.

Is that what you want others to do to you? Stone you to death at the city gates? Listen to what Jesus teach us—it's called the Golden Rule: "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, // do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12)

So, if you want others to be mean to you, then by all means, be mean to them. If you want others to be kind to you, then treat them kindly. This is just common sense. Also, being kind to other people takes far less energy than being angry at other people.

If after you take along two or three witnesses to talk with your brother, but get nowhere, Jesus gives us one more piece of advice: ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

Here Jesus is saying that if you personally couldn't restore the broken relationship, and then you take two or three other Christians with you to try and restore the relationship, then finally you involve the entire congregation to try and have the entire congregation try and restore the broken relationship.

Telling the problem to the entire congregation is the third and last step in this process of reconciling. Unfortunately, too many people love to skip steps one and two in this process and jump right to step three which they interpret as—blast your anger and hate all over the city and around the world

Of course, if that person still refuses to reconcile the relationship, Jesus tells us that you are to treat the person as a non-Christian, someone, who is no longer part of the Body of Christ. One commentary even said that at this point, the person, who has refused to reconcile the relationship, should not even be allowed to receive Holy Communion.

Maybe that sounds harsh, but Jesus wats us to take his Word seriously. Sometimes we treat spiritual things as

though they aren't that important. It's as though we want to learn about who the greatest athlete of 2020 is instead of growing in our own faith in Jesus.

After you go through the process of reconciling with a brother or sister in Christ, who has sinned against you, and that person doesn't reconcile, then the text from Matthew 18 tells us to go back to your brother or sister in Christ with two or three other people from the congregation.

If the person still refuses to reconcile with you, then you bring the matter to the church. If other people from the church aren't able to help reconcile the relationship, then Jesus tells you that you are to treat that person as an unbeliever—an outsider—and that person, though he or she may still attend worship—should not be allowed to partake of Holy Communion or to be considered a voting member of the congregation.

Of course, Jesus ultimately desires restoration and reconciliation. Sadly, though, too many people want to keep stirring the pot of anger and hate for someone else. Some people really aren't interested in restoring a relationship.

And that's sad, because Jesus tells us: "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

If you don't forgive your brother or sister in Christ, who has sinned against you, then how can you expect God to forgive you. It doesn't work that way. You are supposed to forgive other people—even people, who have done awful things to you—because God our heavenly Father has forgiven you.

Then Jesus wraps up these suggestions for reconciling: ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:18-20)

If you reconcile the broken relationship, then that relationship has also been reconciled in heaven. If the church has not been able to reconcile the broken relationship, then that relationship has not been reconciled in heaven.

This is what we pray in the Lord's Prayer: the Third Petition: "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*" *What does this mean*? The good and gracious will of God is done even without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also.

How is God's will done? God's will is done when He breaks and hinders every evil plan and purpose of the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, which do not want us to hallow God's name or let His kingdom come; and when He strengthens and keeps us firm in His Word and faith until we die. This is His good and gracious will."

When two or three of us Christians come together and pray, and earnestly seek God's face, to know what we should do in any and every situation, then God says he with there with us. Thanks be to God that Jesus is with us always unto the end of the ages. Amen.

Now, may the peace of God which transcends all understanding guard and keep your hearts in Christ Jesus. Amen.





TABLE OF DUTIES: TO FATHERS AND TO CHILDREN

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." (Ephesians 6:1–3)

FOR SHARING

1. Share, as time permits, a joy you have experienced as a parent or child.

- 2. Where do you find your greatest challenge in bringing up your children "in the training and instruction of the Lord"?
- 3. In what ways do parents sometimes "exasperate" their children?
- 4. Share about a significant adult Christian role model in your life.
- 5. What changes would you like to make to facilitate spiritual growth in your family?

PRAYER Heavenly Father, help us to remember Your investment in our lives and keep us mindful of Your presence in our families. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Coronavirus: Showing Jesus to a Vulnerable World Jesus Film Project Monday, March 16, 2020 https://www.jesusfilm.org/

Most Christians are familiar with the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And we know that these traits should be evident in the lives of people who follow Jesus.

But have you ever stopped to consider when this fruit shines brightest? They become most apparent in our darkest moments. When things are going well, it's not too difficult for everyone to see themselves as generally joyful or patient. But when the going gets tough, the truth is exposed, and that's precisely when the fruit of the Spirit becomes the most obvious—and the most necessary.

What sets us apart?

As the coronavirus outbreak began to unfold at the beginning of 2020, the direction it would take wasn't entirely clear. Would it fizzle out? Would it stay contained? Or would it spread from continent to continent as it infected more people?

As people in the United States watched countries take unprecedented action to slow the number of infections, concern began to rise. By the time it hit North America and we had the first reported deaths in Washington state, people were on high alert. As people realized that quarantines might be necessary, we started to see the panicked buying and stockpiling of cleaning supplies and personal hygiene products.

While this fear is completely understandable and natural, Christians must take a step back and evaluate our own response. As the children of God, we demonstrate the character of God to the world. And since we know that Jesus is always with us and will never leave or forsake us, we need to ask ourselves some tough questions: How should Christians respond in times of distress? What do we want to demonstrate to a world in crisis about what trust and faith look like? And how can we be salt and light to a world that is frightened and confused? These questions should drive our response.

Practicing wisdom and self-control

Throughout the Old Testament, we see unambiguous instructions about how to handle disease. God gave the Israelites instructions about avoiding certain animals, handling carcasses, and even destroying porous clay pots that had been infected (Leviticus 11).

The Bible created procedures for quarantining infectious diseases that even included guidelines for ensuring that people didn't come into contact with personal items that could transmit germs (Leviticus 13:47–59). For centuries, many cultures looked to the Jewish Scriptures as a roadmap for maintaining public health.

The law instructed God's people on how to handle human waste (Deuteronomy 23:12–14), how to deal with bodily fluids that could carry disease (Leviticus 15). The amount of space dedicated to keeping God's people healthy in extremely practical ways is critical. As Christians, we can look at God's Word and recognize the importance God placed on behaviors that would stop the spreading of illness and disease. This means that we don't want to exercise faith in a way that dismisses or ignores legitimate, common-sense steps to protect the most vulnerable in our communities.

Demonstrating faith and love

On the flip side, we don't want to fall into the temptation of putting our own needs above everyone else's. In a season of confusion and panic, there's a strong pull to hunker down and focus on protecting yourself and your loved ones above everyone else. But this should bring to mind Jesus's pointed question:

"If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that" (Luke 6:32–33).

One of the defining characteristics of committed followers of Jesus is that we don't put ourselves before others. We consider ways that can demonstrate God's love to others in difficult times.

In the middle of the third century, a plague swept through the Roman Empire. Known as the Plague of Cyprian, some reports suggest that upwards of 5,000 people were dying every day. Panic ensued, and healthy people were fleeing from the cities to wait out the plague in the country. But Christians stayed to care for the sick.

In "Church History," the fourth-century account of the church's beginnings, Eusebius explains: "All day long some of them [Christians] tended to the dying and to their burial, countless numbers with no one to care for them. Others gathered together from all parts of the city a multitude of those withered from famine and distributed bread to them all."

What was the response of the Romans around them? Eusebius elaborates that the believers' "deeds were on everyone's lips, and they glorified the God of the Christians. Such actions convinced them that they alone were pious and truly reverent to God."

Thankfully, we don't live in a time when the sick are abandoned to die alone, but there are still ways that we can demonstrate love for our neighbors. One of the main ways we care for others is to ensure we're not putting atrisk and immunocompromised people at risk. But we can also come up with creative ways to care for others:

Watch children for parents who have to work even though schools have been canceled.

Send cards or gift baskets to nurses and care workers.

Make donations to your local food bank.

Set up Google Hangouts with lonely immunocompromised or elderly loved ones.

Drop meals off for older couples who are feeling scared and vulnerable.

The Great Commission in practice

No matter what happens, the Christian mandate is still the same, and it's summed up in the Great Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19–20).

One of the simplest ways we fulfill this responsibility is living lives that demonstrate what it means to love God and love our neighbors. It's in the most stressful and taxing times that the goodness of God shines through His people. And when people witness Christians responding to emergencies with patience, poise, and peace, it puts the beauty and awesomeness of God on display—and the Spirit uses that to draw people. So how are you serving your community in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO FILL UP WITH JESUS

Bible Study has started at 10:45 am in the church basement. Everyone is welcome to come. Bring a friend and enjoy the fellowship. Pastor LaBoube will be leading us through the scriptures teaching us more about Jesus. Come with questions and together with Jesus we will find the answers.

School Supplies: As we return to church, children return to school. We will be collecting school supplies again this year. It will be for one month. If you can help there is a list and container in the narthex. If you can't shop contact Joan Chandler at 882-2560 or call the church office at 881-2243 and someone will do it for you. God Bless your giving hearts. **The Outreach Board.**



Sunday School Starts September 20th Marla Hogan Dir. Of Christian Education.

The fund raiser **ROOT BEER FLOATS** was a success! Over 75 floats were made, and \$587.00 ++ was collected. Thank you to everyone that helped with this project and to everyone that supported this project. A very special thank you to our Lord Jesus Christ who made this day a beautiful day for us. Joan Chandler, Outreach Board.

To **<u>support this future publication</u>** you can donate a monetary gift to cover the cost like what we have done in the past. You can have it in memory of a loved one, or for your anniversary, a birthday, or just because. This will offset the cost of the postage and the paper that is used to print this paper. The ones using the internet may request a paper publication also if they desire, just call the church office. An estimated cost would be \$30.00

NEEDED /WEEK	\$3,225.02
TOTAL GIVING (SUNDAY, (08-30-20)	\$1110.00
SUNDAY ATTENDANCE (08-30-20)	46
CHILDREN IN CHURCH (08-30-20)	1
VOTERS MEETING ATTEND.	38
CHURCH UTILITIES (08-30-20)	\$50.00
VISITORS	1
BIBLE CLASS	NA

	Week of Schedule 09-07- to 09-13
Mon	Pastor's Family Day
Tues	Circuit Pastor Meeting 8 am-12 noon
Wed	Helping Hands 1-4 pm
Sun.	9:30 am Worship / Bible Class 10:30 am
Sun.	9:30 AM WORSHIP\ BIBLE CLASS 10:30 A.M.

BAPTISMAL BIRTHDAYS

Albers	Roger	Sep 14, 1941
Bridgeman	Kirk	Sep 30, 2018
Brodersen	James	Sep 11, 1939
Brodersen	Autumn	Sep 17, 2006
Bruhn	Calvin	Sep 23, 1984
Fick	John	Sep 18, 1932
Fletcher	Fred	Sep 7, 1988
Goslar	Sarah	Sep 4, 1983
Hogan	Joseph	Sep 16, 1961
Johnson	Richard	Sep 9, 1934
Kelm	Matt	Sep 14, 1986
Scheer	Caden	Sep 13, 2009
Thies	Gary	Sep, 1942
Weber	Benjamin	Sep 10, 1995
Wray	Roxie	Sep 20, 1958
Scoles	Shirley	Sep. 25, 1943

BIRTHDAYS

Shelly	Sep 17, 1962	
Crystal	Sep 6, 1956	
Frances	Sep 27, 1945	
Ruth	Sep 25, 1932 87	
Calvin	Sep 1, 1984	
Alan	Sep 15, 1960	
Shari	Sep 25, 1962	
Gloria	Sep 16, 1955	
George	Sep 2, 1932 87	
Pam	Sep 16, 1948	
Jacob	Sep 23, 1995	
	Crystal Frances Ruth Calvin Alan Shari Gloria George Pam	

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Gavin and Kathleen Nevins 54 yrs. Sep 3, 1966

If your birthday or baptism birthday or the birthday or baptism birthday of any church member you know doesn't appear on the list – it is because we don't have it on file. Please contact the church office so this information can be added to our information data.

We are listing Baptismal birthdays to remember and celebrate the day we were

adopted into the family of God

through the washing of the

Holy Spirit.

It is <u>important</u> that all information on our church members be kept updated – including birthday, baptism, confirmation, marriage, children and change of address. Please keep the office updated

Give the office a call or the Pastor	Need a ride to a Dr's appt	Need of a visit
Before going to hospital	Address or name changes	Birth of your baby
Private communion	Entering armed services	Making wedding plans
Desire to serve your Lord through the Church	Death in the family	

Please continue to pray for our church leaders.



"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer." Romans 12:12

Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

PRAYER WARRIORS – The prayer warriors desire to hear from you as to how they can pray for you. We have 14 prayer warriors. We welcome more men and women to join us. if you need prayer call Alice Miller phone number 712-880-2380.

Members of St. Matthew with Special Needs and Concerns needing our prayers. Please call the church office if you want to be added to this list for any reason, thank you.

Nazaria Kaderabek **Bud Dose** Kevin Dose Selma Schrader Elnora Dose Carol Dose John Fick

Family / Friends of Members with Special Needs and Concerns

Sheri Heilman- Sue Oberg's sister; Ron Kraffle friend of Marla & Joe Hogan; Kim Whitton (Marilyn & Duane Hamann daughter); Richard Swain, neighbor of Karen and Jeff Krusen; Lynette Dobrovolny neighbor of Karen and Jeff Krusen

THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY Triston Twedt, Ryan Trucke, Jackie Cardwell

Please drop them a line or two, they love getting mail and they would love hearing from their church family.

Bonnie Banks 86 yrs. Jun 2, 1934 Main Street Apartments **Ring Street** 516 Main Street Apt 2 Mapleton, IA 51034

George Koithan 88 yrs. Sept. 2, 1932 1726 Marcella Heights Carroll, IA 51040

Elnora Dose 85 yrs. May 11, 1935 Embassy Rehab & Care Center 206 Port Neal Rd Sergeant Bluff, IA 51054

Delbert Kroll 87 yrs. Jun. 1, 1933 Mapleton IA 51034

**Myrna Gosch 79 yrs. Jan 9,1941 Pleasant View Care Center 200 Shannon Dr. Rm #108 Whiting, IA 51063

Delores Boysen 81 yrs. Mar. 5, 1939

31153 Juinter Ave Hinton, IA 51024

** indicates a new address

Phyllis Fick 92 yrs. Jun 3, 1928 Willow Dale Care—Assisted Living 404 1st St. Battle Creek, IA 51006

Evelyn Christiansen 100 yrs. Jul 4, 1920 4204 SE. 29th Ave. Amarillo, TX 79103 % Joan Valdez

Carol Dose 86 yrs. Jan. 22, 1934 Sunrise Ave. Maple Heights Nursing Home

Spread the Fruits of the Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Gentleness, Kindness, Self-Control, Goodness, and Faithfulness. You will be rewarded 10



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOU TO CONTINUE TO FILL UP WITH JESUS BY READING AND LISTENING TO THE BIBLE:

LET'S STAY CONNECTED: St. Matthew Lutheran Church Service at 9:30 am e very Sunday am at the church.

Facebook page-.St. Matthew Lutheran-Mapleton-Our services at 9 am every Sunday

website: www.stmatthewmapleton.org – Our services posted weekly

Mission Central... www.missioncentral.us

Lutheran Family Service: www.lfsiowa.org

WEB SITES: Iowa District West—www.idwlcms.org

Hour on the left side of the page.

Camp Okoboji – www.campokoboji.org

"THY STRONG WORD" is a daily devotion airing at 6:25 am Monday through Saturday on KDSN (104.9 FM)

"THE LUTHERAN HOUR" can be heard every Sunday on radio station—KDSN-FM (104.9) at 6:30 am and 1530 at 10:30 am. It is available 24 hours a day on the internet in Real Audio. Visit www.lhm.org and click on the Lutheran



Thank You Jesus for being our true friend always. You proved your love and friendship to us by $_{qr}^{vra,}$ sacrificing your life for us. Assure us that we can always come to You with our hurts. In your prerayer cious name, Amen