

Memory Verse: *The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.* ^{Psalm 103:8}

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 13, 2020

Elim Reformed Church – Kings, IL

APPROACH to GOD

Votum Psalm 124:8

Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Amen.

Hymn 77 Praise The Lord, Ye Heavens, Adore Him Ps148

Sentences Psalm 103:6-8NIV

The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel:

The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Hymn 442 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah Williams

Salutation *from various* Epistles of Paul

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

CONFESSION and ASSURANCE

Prayer of Confession Worship Sourcebook

Let us confess our sin to the Lord.

Gracious God, you have given us the law of Moses and the teachings of Jesus to direct us in the

way of life. You offer us your Holy Spirit so that we can be born to new life as your children.

Yet, O God, we confess that the ways of death have a strong attraction and that we often succumb to their lure. Give us the vision and courage to choose and nurture life, that we may receive your blessing. Amen.

Declaration of Pardon Psalm 145:13-14NRSV

The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds. The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

Believe this good news and live in peace.

Summary of the Law Matthew 22:37-40NRSV

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost: as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE WORD of GOD in PROCLAMATION

Prayer for Illumination

Guide us, O Lord, by your Word and Holy Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find freedom, and in your will discover peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Exodus 14:19-30 NIV

¹⁹ Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

²¹ Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

²³ The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ²⁴ During the last watch of the night the Lord looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. ²⁵ He jammed the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The Lord is fighting for them against Egypt."

²⁶ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." ²⁷ Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward^[b] it, and the Lord swept them into the sea. ²⁸ The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

²⁹ But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. ³⁰ That day the Lord saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. ³¹ And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

Responsive Reading

Exodus 15:1-11, 20-21 NIV

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: "I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

"The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea.

The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.

Your right hand, Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, Lord, shattered the enemy.

"In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.'

But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea."

Hymn 234 Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain 8th Cent.

Prayer for Blessing

Sermon

Rev. Cary Winn

Exodus 12:37b-38 *There were about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. Many other people went up with them, and also large droves of livestock, both flocks and herds.*

After exactly 430 years the Israelites and their vast company left Egypt. With the "blessing" and riches of the Egyptians in hand they set out for the Promised Land. Even still -- once again, God "*hardened the heart*" of Pharaoh. Realizing the cost of losing these laborers, Pharaoh sent his army to reclaim his uncompensated workforce.

Scripture makes it clear that his attitude worked into God's purpose. First, it would provide the opportunity to bring an end to the threat posed by a still violent and powerful Egypt. Ultimately, it would test and then strengthen the

faith of Israel in its Redeemer. At this point, we take up our Scriptures for this morning.

Exodus 14:19 *Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, ²⁰ coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.*

Encamped on the banks of the Red Sea the Israelites seem to have been led into a trap. Yet this was the place to which God's angel had led them. His plan was to take them safely across the sea. He would not remove his protection from them.

The Red Sea of today has undoubtedly undergone changes from what it was in the days of Moses. Currently it is 18 miles at its narrowest point and 210 miles at its widest. Scientists estimate it widens by ½ inch annually. If you are wondering, it might have been as little as 200 feet narrower, in Bible times, than it is today. It was, as it would be today, a substantial obstacle to migration. Only God's miraculous act could bring so many safely to the other side.

To enact his plan, God instructed Moses and Moses obeyed.

²¹ *Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, ²² and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.*

Some have attempted to demystify the miraculous. Arguments have ranged from there being a misreading of the passage to more naturalistic explanations. The former states that it was the Reed Sea not the Red Sea which they crossed. The tidal withdrawal of that body occasionally leaves it possible. But it defies the description, in our passage, of *a wall of water on their right and on their left*. As convenient as that name similarity is in English it is harder to defend in Hebrew. The naturalistic explanation relies upon a tsunami of sorts, begun in the Mediterranean Ocean, which sucked the waters out of the Sea at that very moment. But it defies the description, in our passage, of *all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind*.

Positively, these Jewish and Christian avoiders of the miraculous still tend to attribute these alternative “workings out” to the providential care of God whose purpose was to provide safe passage for the Israelites.

23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. ... 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen—the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

Egyptologists have noted that no physical record of this event exists in substantiated artifacts. Some have taken that as proof that the event never occurred. However, we do know that it was not uncommon for ancient despots to clean the record of their predecessors so that they and they alone would receive adoration. Together, Jewish and Christian sources argue that such an utter military failure

would have been sufficient justification for the purging of all associated records.

29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, ... 31 And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.

While Egyptians would erase this from their history, the Israelites would enshrine it in worship. Their memory of this grand deliverance would not be wiped from the collective witness of God's people. As is so often the case, events of this magnitude bring forth song – Songs of Deliverance. Worship regularly calls us to participate in this method of declaring the power and majesty of our Lord and our God. Here Moses composes a Song of Deliverance which will plant this history deeply in the mind of a nation.

God has given us a remarkable gift in music. I am sure I am not alone in saying that music is one of our finest blessings. It not only brings great joy, but it protects and preserves great and necessary memories. Music has comforted, educated, inspired, and even trained us. To this final point, how many of you can honestly say that you don't sing (at least internally) the alphabet song every time you look to a dictionary or encyclopedia?

But this morning I want us to think about the power of song in worship. At its purest the worship song is a congregation's declaration of God's goodness. Through the singing of well-crafted songs, we rehearse the mighty deeds of God. Historically, songs of worship primarily focused on who God is, what God has done, and what he is doing. The charge which is often brought against contemporary verse is that it places too much emphasis upon what we are

and can do for God. This tendency has led some communities of faith to return to the use of the Psalter for corporate singing. I am not sure that sharp distinction is necessary. Such rigidity may border on legalism.

In the fifteenth chapter Moses' song of worship is recorded. I have included, for our consideration, the portion we read this morning. We have no knowledge of the tune employed but can be certain it was celebratory. While there are times for lament as well as penitential tones, this moment certainly was not one of those times. I would go so far as to say the greatest portion of our worship, and thus our singing, is rightfully marked by joy-filled adoration. After all, we too are the redeemed of the Lord.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord:

It is not always easy to remember, but when we sing God is our audience. It is a performance in which we offer him not only our sincerity but best to him. Together we sing his praises. Please join me, as we once again, "sing" the song of deliverance.

"I will sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea.

"The Lord is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.

The Lord is a warrior; the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the sea.

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covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.

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"In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you. You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like stubble.

By the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up. The surging waters stood up like a wall; the deep waters congealed in the heart of the sea.

The enemy boasted, 'I will pursue, I will overtake them. I will divide the spoils; I will gorge myself on them. I will draw my sword and my hand will destroy them.'

But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

Who among the gods is like you, Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?

Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Both horse and driver he has hurled into the sea."

I greatly appreciate the way in which our passage concludes. It is Miriam singing, "And now, one more time."

May he continue to bring a song to your heart and his praise to your lips, for our great God is good.

OUR RESPONSE to GOD'S WORD

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he shall come 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.

Offering – Please remember to submit your tithes and offerings.

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Gracious Father, God of freedom, you brought your people out of slavery with a mighty hand. Deliver us from our captivity to pride and indifference to the needs and gifts of others, that we may be ready to love

as you have loved us, and to give even as we have received.

Lord, hear us as we pray:

Please offer your personal prayers remembering:

- Family and friends in need of your healing and comforting presence.
- Covid-19 victims and their families.
- Nursing and Convalescent home residents. (Larry & Joyce Bennett, Marge Stouffer, Bo Tasso, and Diane Terviel)
- All who live in fear.
- All who grieve the loss of loved ones.
- Medical facility personnel, first responders, retail, factory, and charity workers whose health is at risk daily.
- Small-business owners, farmers, and the unemployed who are struggling financially during this pandemic.
- Communities suffering from injustice.
- Our leaders.
- The spread of the gospel.

Strengthen us by your Spirit as we join in praying the prayer our Savior taught us to pray:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Hymn 138 Blest Be the Tie That Binds Fawcett

Benediction II Corinthians 13:13NIV

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Amen!

Readings for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Read Exodus Chapter 16

Monday: Exodus 16:2-15 **Thursday:** Psalm 145:1-8

Tues.: Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45 **Friday:** Philippians 1:21-30

Wed.: Jonah 3:10-4:11 **Saturday:** Matthew 20:1-16

Memory Verse: *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in
a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.* Philippians 1:27a