

St. James Episcopal Church \* Morning Prayer Rite I

Worship Leader BC Franson

Processional

There's a wideness in God's Mercy

Hymn 470

470

Jesus Christ our Lord

1 There's a wide-ness in God's mer - cy like the wide-ness of the sea;  
2 There is no place where earth's sor - rows are more felt than up in heaven;  
3 For the love of God is broad - er than the mea - sure of the mind;

there's a kind-ness in his jus-tice, which is more than lib - er - ty.  
there is no place where earth's fail-ings have such kind - ly judg-ment given.  
and the heart of the E - ter-nal is most won - der - ful - ly kind.

There is wel - come for the sin - ner, and more gra - ces for the good;  
There is plen - ti - ful re - demp-tion in the blood that has been shed;  
If our love were but more faith-ful, we should take him at his word;

there is mer - cy with the Sa - vior; there is heal - ing in his blood.  
there is joy for all the mem-bers in the sor - rows of the Head.  
and our life would be thanks-giv - ing for the good-ness of the Lord.

Words: Frederick William Faber (1814-1863), alt.  
Music: Beecher, John Zundel (1815-1882), alt.

87. 87. D

Confession

BCP 42

**Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, we have offended against thy holy laws, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent, according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of they holy Name. Amen**

Absolution Prayer

BCP 42

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant us absolution and remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

BCP 42

Lord, open thou our lips

**And our mouth shall show forth thy praise. Glory 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**

Venite

BCP 44

**O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and show ourselves glad in him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his and he made it, and his hangs prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker. For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him. For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth, and with righteousness to judge he world and the peoples with his truth.**

**Psalm 32**

<sup>1</sup> Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, \*  
and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup> Happy are they to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, \*  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!

<sup>3</sup> While I held my tongue, my bones withered away, \*  
because of my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup> For your hand was heavy upon me day and night; \*

my moisture was dried up as in the heat of summer.

<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you, \*  
and did not conceal my guilt.

<sup>6</sup> I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." \*  
Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

<sup>7</sup> Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in  
time of trouble; \*  
when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.

<sup>8</sup> You are my hiding-place;  
you preserve me from trouble; \*  
you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

<sup>9</sup> "I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you  
should go; \*  
I will guide you with my eye.

<sup>10</sup> Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding; \*  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,  
or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>11</sup> Great are the tribulations of the wicked; \*  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the Lord.

<sup>12</sup> Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the Lord; \*  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

## The Lessons

### First Lesson

Joshua 5:9-12

<sup>9</sup>The Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

### Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this

is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## Gradual Hymn 143

### THE GLORY OF THESE FORTY DAYS

ERHALT UNS, HERR



1. The glo - ry of these for - ty days We cel - e -
2. A - lone and fast - ing Mo - ses saw The lov - ing
3. So Dan - iel trained his mys - tic sight, De - liv - ered
4. Then grant that we like them be true, Con - sumed in
5. O Fa - ther, Son, and Spir - it blest, To you be



1. brate with songs of praise; For Christ, by whom all
2. God who gave the law; And to E - li - jah,
3. from the li - ons' might; And John, the Bride - groom's
4. fast and pray'r with you; Our spir - its strength - en
5. ev - 'ry pray'r ad - dressed; Who are in three - fold



1. things were made, Him - self has fast - ed and has prayed.
2. fast - ing, came The steeds and char - i - ots of flame.
3. friend, be - came The her - ald of Mes - si - ah's name.
4. with your grace, And give us joy to see your face.
5. Name a - dored, From age to age the on - ly Lord.

Text: LM; *Clarum decus jejunii*; St. Gregory the Great, ca. 540–604; tr. fr. the *English Hymnal*, 1906; Maurice F. Bell, 1862–1947, alt. Music: J. Klug's *Geistliche Lieder*, Wittenberg, 1543; adapt. by Johann Sebastian Bach, 1685–1750, alt.

## Third Lesson

Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

<sup>1</sup>Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” <sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable:

<sup>11</sup>“There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. <sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. <sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. <sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate. <sup>25</sup>“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

## **Sermon**

There was a man who had two sons.

So our story begins.

“A man with two sons,”

is how a lot of stories begin,

if you think about it.

That first man, expelled from the garden  
had those two sons  
named Cain and Abel.  
Later followed by those other famous  
brothers, Ishmael and Isaac,  
the duo Esau and Jacob.

There have been many men  
with two sons.  
And the younger of the sons,  
those second born:  
Abel and Isaac and Jacob...  
well, you know how it goes.  
They are beloved,  
the ones born to  
their fathers  
late in life,  
the ones born of the favored wife;  
not the concubine's children, but  
the righteous ones,  
the ones to inherit  
the promises of God.

We expect the second son  
to be clever and righteous,  
savvy and faithful to his father.  
We don't expect the second son  
to squander away his inheritance.  
That is not how the tale of two sons goes.  
And so, it would seem  
our story instantly veers off  
course.  
We find ourselves surprised,  
intrigued by the journey we are on.

This younger son,  
heart of his father's heart,  
takes off for a distant country  
to live his prodigal life  
squandering away all that he had been given,  
a narcissistic lavishness

that we can't help but frown upon.  
Such is not proper living, after all.

And, as if a self-appointed Joseph,  
in an Egypt-like place,  
this younger son  
finds himself  
facing a famine,  
imagining his father's  
servants eating their fill  
of daily bread.

So, he puts on a repentant posture,  
rehearsing his speech of remorse.  
But does it even matter?  
He can barely get it out of his  
mouth, his father doesn't seem  
to even hear him,  
it doesn't seem to matter  
what he says.

Because his father is  
far too busy running  
rushing  
hugging  
kissing  
putting a robe around him  
perhaps one that resembles  
a coat of many colors,  
Ordering his servants  
to kill a fatted calf.  
The opposite of a famine  
awaits him,  
not because his repentance  
was perfect or his posture  
flawlessly humble.

The feast awaits  
not because we say the right things  
or put on a good show of remorse.  
The feast awaits because his father,

his yearning, adoring father was waiting  
for him to come home  
and come home he had.

And this would've  
been a startling image  
of the kingdom of God  
in and of itself;  
a depiction of a radically generous  
and lavish God.

It is far too much mercy  
for any of us to absorb  
in a single day.

It would've been a  
sufficient and scandalous  
tale of grace and forgiveness  
all by itself.

But this is a tale of two sons.

And so now  
we join that elder son –  
the Cain, the Ishmael, the Esau, the one  
our ancient stories so rarely shine a light on,  
letting them slip off into the sidelines of history.  
But here, we have a moment  
to see his world,  
to know what it's like  
to be the son who stayed.

We join him  
on his way in from the fields,  
tired from the sun,  
thirsty and longing  
for respite, for a warm meal, for the coolness of night.

Had he counted the minutes  
the hours, the days  
that he had worked the fields,  
since his younger brother had left,  
his hands bearing the evidence



splintered and calloused,  
had he counted those days?

Had he kept track –  
a long tally of bitter triumphs –  
of the number of goats and calves  
he had raised from birth to slaughter?  
An offering of sustenance for the whole family,  
laced with a dose of indignation.

Had he silently seethed his way through the house  
sucking the air out of the room as he walked in  
or had he been exceedingly gentle with his father  
tiptoeing on eggshells  
too afraid to further shatter a delicate heart?

Had his sense of fairness  
and budding self-righteousness  
ever put a boulder in front  
of his joy before  
this moment, here and now?

We witness his father come toward him  
pleading him to come inside  
to join the feast.

The father, yet again, makes  
a pilgrimage from the house  
with urgency and sincerity  
toward a wayward son.

This elder son's waywardness  
was marked not by opulent abandon  
but by a thriftiness,  
a stinginess of heart.  
His stinginess morphed  
into being,  
with the good-intended  
ingredients of  
justice and fairness  
mixed  
with those nagging

thoughts that he had never been properly  
thanked  
or appreciated.

A deadly recipe.

He has exiled himself from his own home  
and stands there enraged  
unable to cross the hurdle  
of his own hardened and bitter heart.

This elder son,  
embodies what  
poet Jack Gilbert  
warns about in his poem, "A Brief for the Defense":

"To make injustice the only  
measure of our attention is to praise the Devil."

Gilbert is not telling us  
to stop our ears or close our eyes  
to the heap of sadnesses  
we find ourselves witnessing or complicit in.  
He's not saying to ignore the wrongs  
actually done against us or others.  
That will be impossible.  
We live in a land of ruins  
and with hearts that pang  
with indignation and sorrow.

Gilbert, instead, earlier in the poem  
is pleading with us: Don't let the sorrows  
and injustices,  
the wrongs wronged and the deeds done,  
the sins of our brothers and the sins of our own hearts  
be the only things that get our attention,  
don't let all of that  
keep us from "risk[ing] delight."  
Don't let them become immovable boulders  
on your path toward a party.

Because, Gilbert writes later in the poem,  
“There will be  
music despite everything.”

And music there is –  
A joyful and raucous celebration  
in the house right beyond his father’s silhouette.  
Even after his younger brother  
wastes his precious worldly goods,  
even after the sorrow of watching his father  
grieve a beloved son  
and even after years of working  
in the fields alone, abandoned,  
the music begins again.

And here, the parable, this tale of two sons,  
does its final magic.  
It ends.  
It does not narrate  
the choice of the elder son.  
It does not say he turned around  
and walked away, toward the empty fields  
all alone, with his righteousness as his sole companion.  
Nor does it tell us that his heart  
miraculously  
thawed.

It does not tell us what the elder son chooses.

For he is us. And we are him.

And it is our choice to make.

Will we join the great feast  
where sinners of all kinds  
gather,  
welcomed home from their various  
prodigal journeys?  
Will we nurse our resentments  
and self-righteous complaints  
to the end of our days  
alone in our castle on a hill?

Will we get out of our own way,  
and let God's love thaw those bricks  
of bitterness?

Will we come back to  
the only home we've ever known?

It is our choice to make.  
No one will force you through the door.  
The father stands there,  
arms extended,  
eyes hopeful  
and expectant,  
grace abounding  
for you and me,  
a mercy that is  
hard to receive,  
but what else  
is there to do but  
receive it?

The music is playing.  
The fatted calf is ready.  
Will you risk delight?  
Will you keep the feast?

*The Rev. Kellan Day is the rector of St. James Episcopal Church in Greenville, South Carolina.*

The Apostles Creed

BCP 54

**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, dies, and was buried. He descended to the dead, 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**

Peace

**Announcements**

Offertory

## **The Prayers**

The Lord's Prayer

BCP 54

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Suffrage A

BCP55

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;  
**And grant us thy salvation.**  
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;  
**And make thy chosen people joyful.**  
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
**For only in thee can we live in safety.**  
Lord keep this nation under thy care;  
**And guide us in the way of justice and truth.**  
Let thy way be known upon earth;  
**Thy saving health among all nations.**  
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten'  
**Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**  
Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
**And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.**

### **The Collect of the Day**

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### **The Prayers of the People, Form III**

*BCP 387*

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

*That we all may be one.*

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest.

*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence

The General Thanksgiving

BCP 58

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all. We bless you for your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honor and glory, world without end. Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

BCP 58

Amighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication onto thee; and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen

ZION—REIGN OF GOD

380

O Day of Peace

1 O day of peace that dim - ly shines through all our  
 2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the

hopes and prayers and dreams, guide us to jus - tice, truth, and  
 fierce de - vour the small; as beasts and cat - tle calm - ly

love, de - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes. May swords of hate  
 graze, a lit - tle child shall lead them all. Then en - e - mies

fall from our hands, our hearts from en - vy find re - lease, till by God's  
 shall learn to love, all crea - tures find their true ac - cord; the hope of

grace our war - ring world shall see Christ's prom - ised reign of peace.  
 peace shall be ful - filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

Words: Carl P. Daw, Jr., 1944—  
 Music: C. Hubert H. Parry, 1848–1918, harm. Charles H. Webb, 1933—  
 Words © 1982 Hope Publishing Company  
 Music from © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House (admin. The Copyright Company)

U.S.A./England  
 Isaiah 11:6–9  
 S.S.R.D. (L.M.D.)  
 JERUSALEM

Let us bless the Lord.  
 Thanks be to God.