

**Lessons for The Second Sunday after Pentecost**

**June 11, 2023**

Psalm 119:65-72 ~ Prayer for God's goodness including affliction because it teaches God's law.

Hosea 5:15—6:6 ~ God wants our true faithfulness, not just a show of loyalty.

Romans 4:13-25 ~ God counted Abraham as righteous through his faith.

Matthew 9:9-13 ~ Jesus called Matthew from collecting taxes to follow Him in gathering sinners.

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** Faith Embraces God's Mercy

God demonstrated His mercy in the marriage of Hosea to Gomer, but Israel and Judah, thinking they could buy God's favor with their sacrifices, really didn't 'get it.' If they had, their repentance would have been sincere. God called them to embrace His mercy with true faithfulness, the way Abraham had trusted God's gracious promise of land, nation, and blessing. God counted Abraham as righteous when he believed God's promise. Matthew, the tax collector, believed Jesus' call of mercy and embraced it in faith when he rose and followed Him.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Merciful God, You call me to abandon sacrifice that only pretends a show of loyalty and to embrace Your love by extending mercy to others. By your Spirit give me faith to follow You in true commitment that trusts in Jesus, who gave His entire life to heal my sickness of sin. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** Service to God and neighbor does not begin until we respond to the needs of others with joy.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** Bless, O Lord, the time we spend, and money as we give it.  
May our motives always be worthy in Your sight.  
Bless, O Lord, each day for us, as in faith we live it.  
May we bring a blessing to the needy in their plight. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** When we have been drawn up short by irrefutable evidence that we are not the righteous, that indeed we do need God's call of mercy, then we learn what it means that God desires mercy, and not sacrifice. When we have known God's mercy we are able to show mercy to others. Trusting in God's grace won for us through Jesus, we rely on the righteousness of the One who has promised to make us his heirs eternally. Living in that grace, all that we give becomes the fruit of our faith, not a sacrifice.

**Questions to Consider:** What is it about grace that you don't get?

- Is Hosea expressing the people's trust in God's mercy or their abuse of his grace?
- Who gets the credit when faith is counted as righteousness?
- What made Matthew a better recipient of God's mercy than the Pharisees?
- What does it take to turn a grudging giver into a joyful one?

**Bonus on next page:** A contrast between righteousness of our doing and God's gift

## **The Robe of Righteousness**

*Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3*

The righteous lives of those the Lord has claimed  
to shine like torches in the dark of night  
should bring the people of the nations home  
to pay their thanks and tribute to the Lord.  
But we display ourselves in ragged cloaks  
and show for finery our gems of paste!  
Our sad, pathetic lives will never draw  
our neighbors to the glory of our God!

But wait! He takes away our costume jewels  
and in their place gives us a king's own crown!  
He strips us of the filthy rags we wear,  
exposing all the nakedness of sin,  
and gives us garments new, in saving grace:  
His robe of royal blood to wrap us in.  
This coronation robe, this diadem,  
this gift of love gives witness to our God!

– *Gilbert A Franke, 12/27/2014*