

## Sept. 7, Proper 23

### Opening Prayer: BCP

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art aalways more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve: Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

#### **BAS:**

It is God who knit you together  
for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.  
It is God the Lord who searches us out  
and knows us,  
who is acquainted with all of our ways  
who understands our thoughts from afar  
who knows the words on our tongues  
and yet who loves us dearly  
and blesses us beyond understanding.  
Thanks be to God.

**Jeremiah 18:1-11:** *God used the allegory of a potter with clay to show that He can reshape and reform Israel if, as a potter decided with what he is making, it had become misshapen. Through Jeremiah, God exhorted the people to turn from their evil ways or evil would befall them.*

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,  
Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them. Now therefore go to, speak to the men of

Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

**Philemon 9b-10, 12-17:** *Paul was writing to Philemon, a supposed slave owner, and the Church that gathered in his house. Paul did not refer to himself as an Apostle, but a “prisoner.” This perhaps was to show that he identified with Onesimus, a run-away slave that Paul was now sending back home. While visiting with Paul, Onesimus became a Christian, so rather than kill Onesimus, Paul implored Philemon to treat him as if he were Paul.*

For love’s sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself.

**Luke 14:25-33:** *We hear that unless we “hate” our parents, spouse, children and siblings, and even life itself, we cannot be Jesus’ disciple. It’s easy to say, “Last one out shut off the lights!” until we realize the word “hate” in Hebrew-Aramaic means to “love less” or to be less attached to. The disciple must find his or her prime security in Jesus, not in his or her family, nor in preserving one’s “life.” Jesus used two examples to show you must be so dedicated to Jesus’ cause that you are willing to forfeit all that you have.*

There went great multitudes with Jesus: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

*While everyone else is bugging Jesus for some little favor to make this life a little easier and a little more convenient and a little less painful and stressful, Jesus was taking up the ultimate battle to win our eternal life with God, to restore fallen humanity to the image of God, to bring us up from death to life. He renounced all – family, friends, wealth, power, influence, His whole life. To save us. To save you. Jesus counted the cost of your salvation, and considered you worth the price of His Blood. Not with gold or silver were you purchased and won for God, but with the holy precious Blood and the innocent suffering and death of Jesus, so that you may be God's own, a child of God, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in His everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness that He gives you as a free gift of His grace.*

*Here's the truth: None of us would be disciples of Jesus if we counted the cost. We'd never dig the foundation. We'd never send the troops to battle. We're dead. Born dead in sin. We can't free ourselves and no amount of cost accounting and bookkeeping is going to help*

*You want to build a tower to God like they tried to do at Babel? Good luck! Our stairways to heaven fall far short of the glory of God and simply become a laughingstock among the religious. You want to do battle with Sin, Death, and devil? You want to deal with the wrath of God under the Law on your own terms? Count the cost, and see if you have enough to justify yourself. You don't. Dying in Christ is what saves you. Being buried with Christ is what saves you. Being joined to Him through Baptism into His death on His cross saves you. "Hating your life" in this life means letting go of your life as you hold it so that you can receive it as Christ hold it. Renouncing your life means letting go of your control of it recognizing that Christ has better control of it.*

*Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

### **Concluding Prayers**

Let us pray for Charles, our king, and all the leaders of the world's nations as they faithfully serve their people, regardless of position, power and prestige.

Let us pray for our Parish and for all churches who must bear witness to the new way of living in Jesus, the true fountain of living water, that we humble ourselves in submission to one another.

Let us pray for those who are losing their souls in the pursuit of worthless things, changing their glory for something that does not profit them.

Let us pray for those laying down their lives in faithful dedication to God's call, that they might see themselves in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Let us pray for all here present who will one day be judged by God's standards and meet Christ coming in glory, remembering that it is our faith in Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, that makes our righteous souls perfect

Lord of the ages,  
you call the Church to keep watch in the world  
and to discern the signs of the times.  
Grant us the wisdom  
which your Spirit bestows,  
that with your courage,  
we may proclaim your prophetic word and,  
as faithful disciples  
and witnesses of the cross,  
complete the work you have given us to do.  
We make our prayer through your Son,  
our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**For our Parish.**

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful: Sanctify this parish by thine abiding presence. Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel. Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour; and those who are walking in the way of life, keep steadfast unto the end. Give patience to the sick and afflicted, and renew them in body and soul. Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous. Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace, and make us all to be fruitful in good works; O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

## **Lord's Prayer**

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 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, the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:  
And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen*