

Sunday closest to July 13

Year B
Proper 10
RCL

The Collect

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Amos 7:7-15

This is what the Lord GOD showed me: the LORD was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. And the Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"See, I am setting a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will never again pass them by;
the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,
and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the very centre of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said,

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.' "

And Amaziah said to Amos, "O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom."

Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am no prophet, nor a prophet's son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore trees, and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

The Psalm

Psalm 85:8-13

8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
**for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.**

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

The Epistle

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Gospel

Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of Jesus and his disciples, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John,

knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

The Gospel of the Lord.

SERMON

Today, we turn our attention to a poignant and powerful story from the Gospel of Mark. This passage recounts the tragic end of John the Baptist, a man of great faith and unwavering conviction. As we explore this narrative, let us reflect on the themes of integrity, moral courage, and the consequences of our choices.

The ministry of Jesus was rapidly gaining attention. His teachings, miracles, and acts of compassion were spreading far and wide, reaching the ears of many, including King Herod. Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee, heard rumors about Jesus. Some said He was Elijah returned, others believed He was a prophet like those of old, and some even suggested He was John the Baptist, risen from the dead.

Upon hearing about Jesus, Herod was haunted by a memory. He recalled John the Baptist, the fiery preacher who had boldly confronted him about his unlawful marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife. Herod had imprisoned John, but he knew deep down that John was a righteous and holy man. Herod feared and respected John, often listening to him, though his words perplexed him.

Herodias harbored a deep grudge against John for condemning her marriage. Her hatred festered, and she sought every opportunity to silence him. Her chance came during Herod's birthday banquet, a lavish affair attended by high-ranking officials, military commanders, and the leading men of Galilee.

Amid the celebrations, Herodias' daughter, often identified as Salome, danced for the guests. Her performance pleased Herod and his guests so much that he made a reckless promise: "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you, up to half my kingdom!"

Salome, instructed by her mother, seized this moment. She asked for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the presence of his guests, he felt compelled to honor her request. He immediately sent an executioner to the prison, and John was beheaded.

Herod's hasty vow led to an irreversible and tragic outcome. This story serves as a stark reminder of the weight of our words and promises.

Herod's lack of foresight and his desire to impress his guests resulted in the death of a righteous man.

John the Baptist stood firm in his conviction, even when it led to his imprisonment and eventual death. His unwavering integrity and boldness in speaking the truth are an example for all of us. Standing up for what is right, even in the face of severe consequences, is a testament to true faith.

Herodias' unrelenting grudge against John drove her to manipulate her daughter and exploit Herod's vanity. Her inability to forgive led to a heinous act. This narrative teaches us the destructive power of grudges and the necessity of forgiveness in our hearts.

Herod's moral cowardice is evident in his failure to protect John, despite knowing he was a just man. He allowed himself to be swayed by pride and peer pressure, leading to an unjust execution. In contrast, John's moral courage shines brightly, as he remained steadfast in his principles until the end.

As we reflect on this story, let us consider how it applies to our lives today. We are called to stand firm in our faith and morals, even when it is unpopular or dangerous. We must be mindful of our promises and commitments, ensuring they are made thoughtfully and with integrity. Additionally, we must strive to let go of grudges and embrace forgiveness, recognizing the harm that bitterness can cause.

John the Baptist's legacy is one of profound faith and integrity. His life and death challenge us to live with moral courage, to speak the truth in love, and to stand firm in our convictions. May we draw strength from his example and strive to live lives that honor God in all that we do.

E pule kākou, let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

We come before You today with hearts full of gratitude for Your Word and the lessons it imparts. We thank You for the example of John the Baptist, a man of unwavering faith and integrity. Through his life and death, we are reminded of the importance of standing firm in our convictions, speaking the truth in love, and living with moral courage.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SAID PRAYERS

We pray for JCON members who continue their stay in Hawaii.

We pray for the bereaved family of Jean Kawamura (Rania's aunty).

SAID ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Caroline Phan from Grace Cathedral in San Francisco! She has been here before and was eager to see everyone again!

JCON was a success thanks to everyone here! Everyone felt welcome and many of you made old and new connections! Having four clergy up here felt amazing! We had a great attendance with 55 people, just as much as Easter! And the crafts made \$280!

- JCON members enjoyed playing mahjong and hanafuda, six tables!
- We had a great business meeting with reports from the PB's office by Deacon Pam, JCON leaders, and an interview with the newly ordained Kenji Kuramitsu.
- Jackson Sayama who gave us a tour of the Capitol, 22 of us attended, and he talked about being a young Japanese American in Hawaii's political system.
- We had a beautiful presentation of a tea ceremony at the Japanese Cultural Center arranged by Jackson, something many of have never experienced.
- We had a delicious Japanese lunch at Gyotaku in a private room. Fr David shared many pictures of Good Sam members from years gone by!
- We had a delicious dim sum brunch before our closing meeting.
- JCON will meet in Japan next year for a Christian pilgrimage in Nagasaki, to honor the martyrdom of the 26 saints, who were executed by crucifixion in 1597.