

Gospel and Sermon Transcript -6th Sunday After Pentecost - July 5, 2026

00:30

We're glad you're here. I don't know if it's too cheeky to say today we're the

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cool church because we have the air conditioning going. Okay, I guess I said

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it out loud, but I wanted to be sure that we acknowledge with gratitude those who

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have made that happen for us because after heat warnings for several

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consecutive days it's sort of nice to come into a space that's temperate and

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and easy to deal with. It's almost as if our burdens were lightened and our yola.

01:05

There's the gospel reading for today. It really is in there. And we will talk a

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little bit today about a nagging question. And the nagging question is, as

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church, how often do we make things tougher on ourselves than they need to

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or maybe we make them tougher on other people than they need to be. I think

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that's really at the heart of today's gospel reading. So we'll fuss with that

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as we worship today and as we hear a word proclaimed.

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The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 11th chapter. Jesus spoke to

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the crowd saying, "To what shall I compare this generation? It is like children

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sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for

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you and you did not dance. We wailed and you did not mourn. For John came neither

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eating nor drinking and they say he has a demon. The Son of Man came eating and

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drinking and they say look a glutton and a drunkard a friend of tax collectors

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and sinners. Yet, wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.

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At that time, Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have

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hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.

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Yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by

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my father, and no one knows the son except the father, and no one knows the father except

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the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him.

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Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you

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rest.

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Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will

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You will find rest for your souls.

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For my yoke is easy, and my burden is life.

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The gospel of our Lord.

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Won't you be seated.

The Sermon

03:52

Grace and peace to you,

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from the one whose will it is to restore all things.

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There's something about being in your early 20s, I guess, where maybe you feel burden.

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I know somebody who every third sentence was I have to, I have to do this, I have to do

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And one of my more astute teachers, now you know who it was, said to me, "You don't really have to. You choose to."

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And at first I thought, "Well, that's really cheesy because there are things you just have to do."

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So I asked him about this and he said, "Well, think about this. Anything that is a

compelling enough thing for you, you're going to choose to make it happen."

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Even if it is you would like to be hydrated or nourished, well, if you really want that to happen, good thing to eat and drink.

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thinking about how the church has imposed burdens on other people.

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I think it was Captain America that was on his line, "I can do this all day."

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Examples abound.

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But think about even the church as it was morphing into a group of Christ followers.

06:07

Well, you need to speak a language you've never learned or studied

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in some sort of ecstatic spiritual experience to belong.

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Oh, you need to observe a diet of a certain kind

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in order to belong. Oh,

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you need to practice circumcision among your people in order to belong.

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Those three preconditions

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all exist and are spoken to in letters

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to the early churches. And in all three cases,

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the writer of those letters said, "No, those are additional burdens that you

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really don't need to take on." Is that to say that ours is an easy life? Is that to

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say that our call is as Lynn Anderson at 1971 saying oh my mic cut out just as I

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said that maybe I wasn't supposed to I beg your pardon I didn't promise you a

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rose garden remember that one some of you maybe okay so what is it that the

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church is called to do. What are those fundamental things? I'm going to sketch a

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bit our own context before I get at that a little bit. How often have we said

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we're tired, we're exhausted, there aren't enough of us to do the work that we're

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called to do.

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That's reality.

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And I'm not going to talk you out of it. I'm not going to shame you because it's reality.

08:00

But what do we do with this reality, I think, is the question.

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Further, in our context, there are places where they're bursting at the doors, probably even this morning.

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There's some charismatic, getting everybody whipped up.

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Probably has really nice hair and a nicely tailored suit

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or skinny jeans that plays the--

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everything.

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I've already got a memo about pastor,

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don't wear the skinny jeans.

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You'll just really kind of put people off their food.

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So yeah, you're fine.

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Don't worry about that.

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But we have adopted this almost inferiority complex

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is shaming that we're not them. Good news. We're not and we're not supposed to be. We

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have a very different call. There are some very popular churches in North America that

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draw thousands of people by playing on our insecurity which having taken advertising

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classes in the mid 80s I can tell you that's the whole gambit. Make people

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insecure about something and then spin around and tell them you've got the

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solution. Do you have iron pore blood? Do you have halitosis? Well we can fix that

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with whatever this thing is. Well I'm here to tell you that sometimes

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Sometimes Christianity gets distorted.

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Do you have a dysfunctional family?

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Do you have problems at work?

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Do you have a bank account that doesn't have enough stuff in it?

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We can fix that.

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These I would say are burdens.

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There was an article that was passed along to me this week that I shared with a couple

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of you called Listen Up, Lutherans. The article says that the church is not

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called to emotional experiences or to charismatic leaders, but there are some

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things we are called to and now I get to the answer to the question I posed a few

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minutes ago. What do we do? We teach grace. We practice hospitality. We bear

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We are a witness to God's love in the world.

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We create community.

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Going much farther back,

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the church saw itself as a church

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that was set apart as a contrast society

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to a heavily burdensome empire,

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the Roman Empire,

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that saw themselves as universal in their purpose

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sent out to do God's loving purposes and to imitate Jesus in welcoming the

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stranger and teaching grace and extending hospitality. Those words might

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sound familiar if you have spoken the creeds of the church. In our baptism, what

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do we say that we are called to proclaim God and Christ in word indeed, to care

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for this world that God made, to work for God's purpose for the life of the world,

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that's the stuff we do with this brand spankin' new life we have in baptism.

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This is what the church is called to do.

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It may sound easy, but it's probably far from easy.

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And so the question becomes, we who are tired and be leaguered and weary,

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what do we do about that?

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Well, I don't have the answer. But I can tell you a couple of things. One is that

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what we do is not a DIY project. The witness that we heard over that Easter

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season was Jesus imparting spirit into the church and saying that there would

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be one that would come alongside us and walk with us wherever we find ourselves

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and whatever job we are called to do.

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Besides not being DIY and having a spirit infused sort of life, we have each

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other. We're not called to do this by ourselves. That's why there are so many

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analogies in the Bible about the church being like a body, that you need all of

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these systems working together for healthy functioning. So as my friend Elaine,

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former bishop, would say, "We have God, we have each other, we have all we need to

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do whatever it is we are called to do."

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Again, that might sound like the rose garden and not the easy yoke.

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But the easy yoke of it is that we do what we can as long as we can while we can.

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Praying for God's guidance and God's leading.

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that even as we are tired, what we do matters.

14:01

Because even in our beleaguered state sometimes,

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we are part of God's amazing and wacky mission

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to bless and save the world.

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Thank God that we get to do that together.

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Amen.