



ABOUT THE PROPERs

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Proper 12

July 26, 2026



*What Makes Christians Different
Christians Seek Spiritual Wealth*

What do you consider your life's priorities? If you made a list, what would be near the top? Many people start with family and friends. Financial security and health follow closely. Reputation and recreation make the cut. How about faith? Is it the top priority? What if other priorities must be sacrificed to keep faith the top priority? This week we are given an honest assessment of what really matters in life. The kingdom is worth everything. Worldly wealth can buy the things of this world, the type of things that rust and decay, things that will not last. True wealth is spiritual wealth. It can be found only in God and his eternal blessings for us in Christ. The Christian seeks first spiritual wealth and will sacrifice anything to obtain it.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you reveal your mighty power chiefly in showing mercy and kindness. Grant us the full measure of your grace that we may obtain your promises and become partakers of your heavenly glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson ¹

1 Kings 3:5-12

God only gave one man the choice between unlimited riches and spiritual wealth. We marvel at Solomon's faith in choosing great wisdom over great riches—especially since we so often fail in the pitifully small choices we make! Look at Solomon and see an example of what God means by spiritual wealth. He doesn't mean we need to live as mendicant monks; he doesn't ask us to forgo all earthly treasure. He just doesn't want us to value them more than the pearl of great price. After choosing spiritual treasure, God blessed Solomon in unbelievable ways. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given you as well.

Second Reading

1 Timothy 6:17-21

Could Paul's words be more timely or appropriate for this generation? He instructs preachers everywhere to warn the rich about the two pet sins of the wealthy: arrogance and false hope. Mankind so easily falls in the error of thinking that earthly treasures can provide security or a sense of worth. In our affluent society both of those sins run rampant in many a Christian heart. God commands us not to trust in earthly treasure because he wants us to have a firm foundation on which to stand, a certainty on which to place our hope. That can only be found in spiritual wealth. God richly provides for us, and then we give thanks by being rich in good deeds. Spiritual wealth is certain and secure, for it is treasure laid up in heaven.

Gospel ¹

Matthew 13:44-52

Jesus' parables teach us to seek spiritual wealth. Both of the men in the parables found great treasure. For one it was a complete surprise, as unexpected as it was valuable. For the other it came from an expert search by a discerning man. Before they found these new treasures, both men no doubt valued what they previously owned. But once they saw this new treasure, see how little they valued all else they had! The spiritual wealth of Christ and his Gospel puts everything else into perspective; in fact it marginalizes all else. The importance of this truth comes to light in the parable of the net. All people, rich and poor, will be caught up. Only those who found true spiritual wealth are spared the furnace. Jesus concludes with an encouragement for the preacher of the Gospel: you have found true wealth in Christ; you have been given a storeroom full of treasures new and old. Bring them out to God's people with joy and delight.

Psalm of the Day ⁴

Psalm 63 C

“Lord, You Are My Hope and Stay”

The Church sings Psalm 63 in services that emphasize a saving connection to God as the most important aspect of life. The early church used this psalm in daily public prayers. Martin Luther said, “Psalm 63 is a prayer psalm. When David had to flee into the wilderness because of Saul, he desired to be in the sanctuary and to hear God’s Word. In the meantime, he meditates on God’s promise that he will be king and comforts himself. Today people can still meditate on this psalm, remembering that they are God’s children and heirs, with faith and love for his Word.”

Gospel Acclamation

Colossians 3:1,2

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

Hymn of the Day

717 “What Is the World to Me” (Georg M. Pfefferkorn, 1645-1732)

Church Year Season ¹

Season after Pentecost

After reliving the great events of the life of Christ, the worshipping Church spends half a year focusing on the teachings of Christ. The Church wears green during the season of Pentecost as the Spirit uses those teachings of Jesus to grow the faith of believers. The appointed lessons cover a great body of doctrine for faith and life.

Minor Festivals

St. James the Elder, Apostle (July 25)

Not to be confused with James “the Less” (son of Alphaeus) or with James, the brother of Jesus. James “the Elder” was one of the sons of Zebedee who was called away from his family’s fishing business along with his brother John to be a disciple of Jesus. Jesus nicknamed James and his brother the “Sons of Thunder.” James, John, and Peter formed the inner circle of disciples who were closest to Jesus. James was one of the pillars of the Jerusalem church. James was put to death by the sword by Herod Agrippa I. He was the first of the Twelve to be martyred and the only one whose death is recorded in Scripture.

Colors & Symbolism

Green

Green is the color of life, refreshment, growth, and regeneration. Whereas the first half of the Church Year (the “Festival Half” or the “Half Year of Our Lord”) focused on the life of Christ during his earthly ministry, the emphasis for the second half (the “Non-Festival half” or the “Half Year of the Church”) shifts to the result of Christ’s work through the Word: the work of defining and creating faith, and inspiring its fruits. The theme of the Christian’s growth in faith (like healthy green plants) fills the season.

Nain Paraments

Sundays after Pentecost

Superfrontal: When Isaiah was called to be a prophet of the LORD, two seraphs (a class of angels) appeared and called out to one another, “Holy, Holy, Holy” (Isaiah 6:3). The threefold repetition of the divine adjective emphasizes the infinite holiness of the Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some congregations count the Sundays in this season of the Church Year as the Sundays after the festival of the Holy Trinity, calling it the “Trinity season,” or the “Sundays after Trinity.” That is why most paraments for this season feature symbols of the Holy Trinity.

Lectern antependium: The equilateral triangle is one of the oldest emblems of the Holy Trinity. The three equal sides and angles represent the equality, unity, and co-eternal nature of the three persons of the Trinity. Though they are three distinct persons, they are of one essence as one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). The three interwoven circles represent the three members of the Trinity and emphasize their unity and eternal nature; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are without beginning or end.

Pulpit antependium: At each point of the triangle (the significance of the triangle is explained above) is a nimbus, Latin for *cloud*. The nimbus appears as a circle, or a halo. In Christian artwork, nimbi surround the head of the Father (when he is depicted as a human), Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit (when he is depicted as a dove) to signify their glory and holiness. In artistic depictions of believers (saints), nimbi are placed around their heads to show that they have been made holy by God’s grace in Christ and through faith. The three fish in between the nimbi and that meet in the middle of the triangle signify Christians who are united to the Triune God by faith. Fish have come to represent the followers of Jesus because believers have been brought into the ship of God’s church through the efforts of those who proclaim Gospel (cf. “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19).

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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