

7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – (OT-17)**ST PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH BUNDOORA****Sunday 27th July 2025****Fr. Stephen Monsieigneur****Readings:** Hosea 1:2-10 / Psalm 85 / Colossians 2:6-19 / Luke 11:1-13¹**Theme:** *"Grace in the Gaps: Where Judgment Meets Mercy"***Hosea 1:2-10**

² When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, 'Go, take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.' ³ So he went and took Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son. ⁴ And the Lord said to him, 'Name him Jezreel; for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.'

⁶ She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the Lord said to him, 'Name her Lo-ruhamah, for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. ⁷ But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow, or by sword, or by war, or by horses, or by horsemen.'

⁸ When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹ Then the Lord said, 'Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not my people and I am not your God.'

¹⁰ Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered; and in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people', it shall be said to them, 'Children of the living God.'

Psalm 85

1 Lord, you were favourable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.

3 You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.

4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.

5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

6 Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?

7 Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

8 Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,

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- that his glory may dwell in our land.
- 10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
- 11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
- 12 The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
- 13 Righteousness will go before him and will make a path for his steps.

Colossians 2:6-19

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. ⁸ Watch out that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, ¹⁰ and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹ In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by the removal of the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; ¹² when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁶ Therefore, do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food or drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths. ¹⁷ These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the body belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, initiatory visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, ¹⁹ and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, grows with a growth that is from God.

Luke 11:1–13

1 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” ² So he said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, may your name be revered as holy.

May your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

⁵ And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread,’ ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷ And he answers from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything out of friendship, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ “So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches

finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish?

¹² Or if the child asked for an egg, would give a scorpion? ¹³ If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

SERMON

I confess that within me, there are gaps. Gaps between my intentions and my actions. Between my profession of faith and my daily surrender. Between my longing for righteousness and my pursuit of it. These gaps—between me and God, me and others—can at times feel like chasms. Yet today, even with this reality, I celebrate: -- why?

--- Because grace lives in those gaps.

The prophet Hosea exposes an uncomfortable truth. God commands Hosea to take a “wife of whoredom”² —a vivid metaphor for Israel’s spiritual unfaithfulness. In the naming of Hosea’s children—Jezreel, Lo-ruhamah meaning ‘*not pitied*’, and Lo-ammi, meaning ‘*not my people*’ —we hear divine heartbreak. Israel had walked away, and the gap was immense.

Even in judgment, grace whispers its intention: “Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea... and they shall be called Children of the living God”³. God’s covenant always moves toward the gap.

The psalmist cry, “Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you?”⁴ is a plea from a people who know their history, their failures, and the grace that has always followed. Hearing the poetic words “Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other,”⁵ the Israelites know hope. Have you ever experienced that moment when even in brokenness you have known hope, when God’s love rushes in to mend the divide? God’s character is not only just—it is relentlessly redemptive.

In Colossians, Paul invites us deeper. “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him”⁶. But how? When the gaps we are experiencing feel insurmountable. Paul answers: “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him”⁷. In Christ, our incompleteness meets divine wholeness. The record of our failings—the cosmic “IOU”—is cancelled and nailed to the cross⁸. Paul is teaching us that God doesn’t deny the gaps; rather, filling them with grace poured through Christ.

² Hosea 1:2,

³ Hosea 1:10,

⁴ Psalm 85:6

⁵ v.10

⁶ Colossians 2:6

⁷ v.9–10

⁸ v.14

And when I struggle to trust this grace, Jesus teaches me to pray. In Luke 11, the disciples plead, “Lord, teach us to pray”⁹. In response, Jesus gives them words of relationship, dependence, and forgiveness. “Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive...”¹⁰. And then he speaks of persistence. Of a friend knocking. Of a father who gives good gifts. “How much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”¹¹. Here is the promise: even in my slow growth, my faltering faith, God moves into my gaps with presence and provision.

Grace in the gaps means I don’t have to earn my way back. It means God’s mercy finds me, even when my prayers are weak and my hope is thin. Hosea, Psalm 85, Colossians, and Luke each declare: God does not abandon any of us to the chasm. Instead, God enters it, filling it. And from it, creating life.

Today I live aware of my imperfections. But more profoundly, I live aware of God’s relentless grace shown to me. A grace that repairs, that reconciles, that revives. A grace that waits with me, works in me, and walks ahead of me. A grace that is boundless. All I have to do is ask and it will be given, seek and it will be found, knock and the door will be opened.

As the hymn “He Giveth More Grace” by Annie Johnson Flint¹² declares;

*“His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.”*

We all have gaps, and we must as best we can, work to resolve them, but we are assured that these gaps are not dark, empty spaces unless we make them so. For through our surrender to Christ, Grace lives in the gaps. And where grace lives, life begins anew.

Let us pray,
God of relentless mercy,
fill the gaps in our hearts with Your grace.
Where there is fear, sow peace.
Where there is failure, restore hope.
Knit together what is broken in each of us,
--- teaching us to trust in Your fullness.
Let our lives reflect Your love,
--- persistent and complete. Amen.

⁹ V.1

¹⁰ vv.3–4

¹¹ v.13

¹² **Annie Johnson Flint** (25 December 1866 – 8 September 1932) was a prolific writer of Christian poems.