



Week Five:
GRACE THAT BEARS FRUIT
Worship Helps

SUNDAY, MAY 26, 2019

KEY VERSE

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against things like this. — Galatians 5:22-23 (CEB)

SUGGESTED VERSES FOR WORSHIP

Galatians 5:5-6, 22-26

KEY CONCEPT

Grace frees us from the burden of the works of the law and frees us for the law of love so that we might be empowered to bear the fruit of love.

CALLS TO WORSHIP

Call to Worship #1 (Responsive)

Leader: Throughout the ages, disciples have said, "I will follow you wherever you go."

People: Lord, give us the freedom to follow you in the ways of love.

Leader: We come from busy homes, filled with little time to consider Christ in our lives.

People: Lord, give us the strength to follow you in the ways of peace.

Leader: In times of struggle, we look to God for help.

People: Lord, give us the opportunity to follow you in the ways of kindness.

Leader: Today, we celebrate the Holy Spirit, who shows us the joy of following God.

People: Lord, give us the patience to follow you in the ways of faith. Amen.

(<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3972/worship-elements-june-26-2016>)

Call to Worship #2 (Responsive)

Leader: The whole law is summed up in a single commandment,

People: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Leader: Live by the Spirit;

People: For we are led by the Spirit into the world.

Leader: We belong to Jesus;

People: We do not belong to this world.

Leader: Let us love and serve one another, as led by the Spirit;

People: May we worship God, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the love of Jesus Christ.

Welcome/Spoken Word Introduction

Good morning and welcome to worship this sixth Sunday of Easter. Yes, we are counting down these Sundays after Easter as we work our way through Galatians: Gospel of Grace. Grace is the unmerited, loving action of God in our lives. We've seen how grace transforms, that with grace we can embrace our differences and expand our ministry possibilities, that grace clothes us covering our divisions, and grace forms us into the likeness of Christ.

This is Memorial Day weekend and communities all over the United States are celebrating with parades and picnics, remembering the men and women who died in service to our country, or, as it is often phrased, “died for our freedom.” Freedom – most commonly understood as the power or right to act, speak, or think as we want, without interference or constraint. As in “freedom of speech” and “freedom of religion.” And there are other definitions of freedom, including the state of not being enslaved or imprisoned. Biblical freedom follows this latter definition; biblical freedom is not being held captive. As in Moses freeing the Hebrews from captivity in Egypt, to live as the people of God in the Promised Land. Biblical freedom is a freedom from and a freedom to.

Today, as we listen to the words of Paul from the 5th chapter of the Gospel of Grace, we come to understand that grace frees us from the burden of the works of the law and grace frees us to bear the fruit of the Spirit. Grace frees us to live by the Spirit, loving one another, and bearing the fruit of love in all aspects of our lives.

PRAYERS, LITANIES, ETC.

Opening Prayer #1

*Our heavenly Father,
we your humble children invoke your blessing on us.
We adore you, whose name is love,
whose nature is compassion, whose presence is joy,
whose Word is truth, whose Spirit is goodness,
whose holiness is beauty, whose will is peace,
whose service is perfect freedom,
and in knowledge of whom stands our eternal life.
Unto you be all honor and all glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

[United Methodist Book of Worship #462]

Opening Prayer #1

Crafter and Creator, Designer and Dreamer, call us into Your dream of how life should be, where Your children love one another and care for one another. Call us into Your design in which we are reminded always of our interconnectedness. Call us to listen to where You are speaking, to follow Your guidance, and to look to You, always at work in our world and in our lives, for You are always about to do something new in each of us. May we listen, may we love, and may we learn. Amen.

Opening Prayer #2

God, you call us to go where Christ leads. Turn us from the ways of the world; guide us to fullness of joy in the Spirit, where bodies and souls rest secure; and grant us strength to follow the way of the cross, which frees us to love one another for the sake of all creation. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

*Holy God,
author of the Word made flesh,
scribe holding the pen of your Apostle Paul:
open us to your Spirit,
that as scripture is spoken and your Word proclaimed,
your grace may transform, clothe, form, and sustain us
that we may bear the fruit of your perfect love
to the glory of Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray. Amen.*

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #75, adapted for this series]

Statement of Faith

*We are children of God.
We have been water-washed and Spirit-filled.
We're dead to sin and alive in Christ.
We're done with law, and live under grace.
Our hearts are set on righteousness.
Our minds are fixed on life and peace.
Suffering is nothing, compared to the glory to come.
For we're heirs to the life Christ is bringing!
We are children of God!*

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #75, adapted for this series]

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,
our sins are too heavy to carry,
too real to hide,
and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name,
what our hearts can no longer bear,
and what has become for us
a consuming fire of judgment.
Set us free from a past we cannot change;
open to us a future in which we can be changed;
and grant us grace
to grow more and more in your likeness and image
that we might bear the fruit of your Spirit;
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #86, adapted]

Great Thanksgiving

See Week 2 Worship Helps for a Gospel of Grace/Eastertide Great Thanksgiving.

Sending Forth/Benediction #1

May the grace of God free you from the bondage of the law.
May the grace of God free you for life in the Spirit.
May the grace of God bear in you joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
May the grace of God convince you, in every situation, to love.
Go now to love others, even as Christ loves you.

[UM Worship & Song Worship Resource, #176, adapted]

Sending Forth/Benediction #2

For freedom Christ has set you free. Let us leave this place with the deep assurance that Christ is able to break every form of bondage. And Christ will through his Spirit, fill your life with love. Go forth in the freedom and love of Christ.

CREATIVE ELEMENTS

Hymns

Breathe on Me, Breath of God – UMH 420
Christ is Risen – UMH 307 [Eastertide]
Faith, While Trees are Still in Blossom – UMH 508
Freely, Freely – UMH 389
I'm Gonna Sing when the Spirit says Sing – UMH 333
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace – TFWS 2171
O Spirit of the Living God – UMH 539
Of All the Spirit's Gifts to Me – UMH 336
Spirit of God – TFWS 2117
Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart – UMH 500
Spirit of the Living God – UMH 393
Where Charity and Love Prevail – UMH 549

Contemporary Music Themes

Sanctifying grace, personal holiness, Holy Spirit, social holiness, love

Eastertide Symbol

Flowering Bulbs – while Easter lilies have long been a part of our Easter celebrations, potted blooming bulbs have recently joined the lilies in some sanctuaries. Tulips, daffodils, and hyacinth are among the first new life to sprout and bloom after the dark and cold of winter.

There is nothing that the bulb can DO to make itself bloom. And the foliage that appears looks nothing like the bulb from which it comes. Yet, the nutrients and moisture in the dark, cold soil are absorbed by the bulb which bears glorious, colorful, spring beautifying blooms.

The fruit of the Spirit are born within us, and then begin to show in all we say and do.

As a Response to the Word/Sermon, invite the congregation to spend a moment pondering which “fruit of the Spirit” that God is trying to grow in them in this season, and what “work of the flesh/ego” they need to be freed from in order for the Spirit’s fruit to grow. Provide biodegradable planting cups and invite each individual to write their fruit and their work inside the planting cup. Then provide potting soil and individual annual flower starters (or seeds) to plant in their planting cup. These can then be taken home and planted in a garden, as a reminder of the work God is doing in them.

©2019 Materials written by the Assistant District Superintendent Committee of The West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church unless noted. All rights reserved. May be used with permission and attribution to ©2019 West Ohio Conference of The United Methodist Church.

©2016 Worship Elements: June 26th, 2016, by Sara Dunning Lambert. Used courtesy of www.ministrymatter.com; a subsidiary of United Methodist Publishing and Cokesbury Publishing.