

Worship on the Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

10:00 am September 06, 2026

Minister: The Rev. Brad Childs Music Director: Binu Kapadia

Vocalist: Lynn Vaughan Welcoming Elder: Darlene Eerkes

Reader: Sophia Hsu

We gather to worship God

Music prelude

Greeting

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

P: and also with you

Lighting of the Christ candle

Welcome and announcements

Preparation for worship

Call to worship:

L: Sing to God a new song.

P: We will worship God, our Maker!

L: Let us praise God with song and dance,

P: For God is gracious and loving!

L: Let us bring God glory and honour,

P: Praise the Lord.

Opening praise: *Here's my heart*

Prayers of approach and confession

God of grace, you made us, you walked among us in Jesus,
and by your Spirit you stay with us still.

For who you are and all you do,
we worship you—Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

In the light of your goodness, we look honestly at ourselves and confess:
God of mercy,

Christ offers us peace, yet we remain a divided people.

We nurse quiet fears and jealousies that turn neighbour against neighbour,
congregation against congregation,
nation against nation.

We chase profit and comfort that scar your creation
and leave others struggling for the basics of life.

We stay silent when speaking up would cost us something.

We cling to being right more than being kind.

We take the easy path and leave the hard work of reconciliation to someone else.

We grow comfortable with patterns that harm,
and we forget that the people we dismiss or overlook
are made in your image.

Have mercy on us, O God.

Forgive what we have done and what we have left undone.

Set us free from the old ways that keep us small.
Give us soft hearts, steady courage, and open hands,
so that we may serve you as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Response: *I will trust in the Lord*

Assurance of God's pardon

The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.
May the God of mercy, who forgives us all our wrongs,
strengthen us in all goodness,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

We listen for the voice of God

Song: *Seek ye first* (625)

Scripture readings: Romans 13:8-14 & Matthew 18:15-20

Response: *Glory to the Father*

Message: Excommunicated

The practice of Church Discipline is in the bible. But do we do it? What does Jesus say about it and what does it mean for us today in a world so different from when it was first discussed?

Some things we would rather not talk about in church.

We like to talk about grace.

We like to talk about forgiveness.

We like to talk about God's love.

We like to talk about salvation and heaven.

But Scripture also brings up difficult subjects we cannot avoid. One of those subjects is church discipline. And even more difficult is the subject of excommunication—the formal removal of someone from the fellowship of the church because of persistent, unrepentant sin.

In Presbyterian congregations, it is rare. We sometimes withhold the Lord's Supper. We occasionally remove a minister from office. Full excommunication almost never happens. As of 2017, the Presbyterian Church in Canada set the practice aside, not because it was judged unbiblical, but because in a mobile society a person can simply start attending another congregation. Still, the teaching of Jesus remains and as it says in 2 Timothy 3:16, "all scripture is God-breathed and useful".

Still, we like the Love talk, and this honestly sounds pretty harsh. How can a church that preaches love tell someone, "You cannot continue to worship here among us"? How can a church that proclaims forgiveness also practice discipline?

Parents discipline their children and still love and forgive them. The same principle applies to the church.

The clearest answer is found in what Jesus says in Matthew 18. Jesus does not present church discipline as the opposite of love. When it is practiced according to His command and with the right heart, discipline is an expression of love.

1. “If Your Brother Sins Against You”

Jesus begins:

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.”

Notice where He starts. He does not say, “Tell everyone.” He does not say, “Post about it.” He does not say, “Gather your friends and make sure everyone knows.”

He says: Go to him. One person. One conversation. One opportunity for repentance and restoration.

That is profoundly important. When someone hurts us, our natural tendency is often to talk *about* them before we talk *to* them. We tell our spouse, our friends, people in the church. By the time we finally speak to the person who actually offended us, everyone else already knows one side of the story. And here’s a surprise... we aren’t always right. That one-on-one communication is key to fixing things.

Jesus gives us a different way: Go privately. Why? Because the goal is not humiliation. The goal is restoration.

Jesus says, “If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.” What beautiful language. He does not say, “You have defeated your enemy.” He says, “You have gained your brother.”

The purpose of confrontation is not to win an argument. It is to win a brother or sister back. Christian confrontation should always have restoration as its destination.

2. Love Does Not Ignore Sin

This is where Romans 13 helps us. Paul writes, “Owe no one anything, except to love each other.” Christianity is a religion of love. But biblical love is not the same thing as simply being nice.

Sometimes we think loving someone means never confronting them. Imagine a doctor who discovers that a patient has a dangerous disease. The treatment will be uncomfortable. Should the doctor say nothing because he does not want to hurt their feelings? That would not be love.

Love tells the truth. Love warns. Love intervenes. Love seeks healing. Paul says that love “does no wrong to a neighbour.” Genuine Christian love cannot simply stand by while someone destroys their own life or damages the community through persistent wrongs.

There are times in the church where we might have to bump heads a little bit.

Sometimes the most loving words we can say are: “What you are doing is hurting you and hurting others.” That is not hatred. That is love willing to tell the truth even when it’s hard.

3. What Happens When They Refuse to Listen?

Jesus continues: “But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you.”

Now the circle becomes wider, but notice the careful process. First one person. Then two or three (often including an elder). Only later does the matter come before the church.

There is patience here. Restraint. Opportunity for repentance. A desire to establish the truth fairly rather than reacting emotionally.

Jesus is teaching the church not to be impulsive. We should never rush to condemn. We should never treat rumors as facts. We should never use church discipline to settle personal grudges. And we should never confuse personality differences or secondary matters with serious, unrepentant sin.

I remember as a young person in an independent Baptist church there was a woman who wore jeans to worship. They sent a deacon to her house to demand she confess her sin and correct the matter. When she refused, they set up a public confrontation after the service. That is not the spirit of Matthew 18.

In our own tradition the process has been used for clear moral failure—adultery by a minister, misappropriation of funds, refusal to submit to the courts of the church—not for clothing choices. The process Jesus describes is deliberate and specific because people matter: the person who has done wrong, the person who feels harmed, the witnesses, and the unity of the congregation. They all matter.

4. “Tell It to the Church”

Next Jesus says: “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.”

If the person still refuses to listen even when the whole church is involved, Jesus says, “Let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” This is the biblical foundation for what Christians have traditionally called excommunication.

5. What Is Excommunication?

The word means, essentially, being excluded from the communion and fellowship of the church. In some traditions it has been understood as nearly synonymous with being cut off from salvation. But let’s be clear about what it is *not* supposed to mean.

It is not “God hates you.”

It is not “You are beyond hope.”

It is not permission for Christians to hate, mock, or seek revenge.

Rather, the church is saying: “Your continued, unrepentant behavior is fundamentally inconsistent with the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, and we cannot simply pretend that everything is spiritually well.” If someone steals all the money from the organ fund (as happened at a church I worked at in Millwoods, you don’t just go straight to forgiveness and you don’t keep that person in charge of other funds. And like it or not, if you go to them and they admit and repent, you also need to be able to continue worshiping next to them.

Excommunication when and if it happens is not punishment motivated by anger. It is discipline motivated by truth and unity. The church is saying: You have been warned. You have been called to repentance. You have been given opportunities to turn back.

Because you are refusing, we can no longer affirm your conduct as consistent with Christian discipleship.

That is painful. But sometimes love must draw a boundary.

6. Not the Same as Condemning Someone to Hell

This point is crucial. The church does not possess the authority to declare anyone's eternal destiny. God alone is the Judge. The church's responsibility is to uphold the truth of the Gospel, protect the integrity of Christian fellowship, and call sinners to repentance.

When someone is removed from fellowship, the message should never be "There is no way back." The message should be "Come home."

And notice this: When Jesus says treat the unrepentant person as a Gentile and a tax collector, ask yourself—how did Jesus treat Gentiles and tax collectors? He sought them out. He ate with them. He called them to Himself. Church discipline must leave the door of repentance wide open.

7. The Danger of Cheap Grace

There is another danger. Sometimes churches become so afraid of being judgmental that they stop practicing any form of discipline. We say, "Who are we to judge? Everyone makes mistakes. God is loving. Just forgive them."

But forgiveness does not mean pretending sin doesn't matter. Grace does not mean calling evil good. Love does not mean abandoning truth.

Imagine a family in which one person continually abuses another. If everyone simply says, "We just need to forgive," but nobody confronts the abuse, that is not biblical love. Forgiveness and accountability belong together. Grace does not eliminate the need for repentance.

Jesus never said, "Sin doesn't matter." He said, in effect, "Come to Me—and leave your old life behind." The Gospel is not merely that God loves us exactly as we are. The Gospel is that God loves us so much that He refuses to leave us exactly as we are.

8. The Danger of Harsh Discipline

The opposite danger is real as well. Some churches have practiced discipline without love. They have used it as a weapon. Instead of reserving the most serious steps for clear, destructive, unrepentant sin, they have applied them to divorced couples, unmarried couples living together, or other secondary matters. They forgot how to keep the main thing the main thing or like a quote I love "In essentials unity, in non-essentials diversity and in all things charity". Instead, they have humiliated people, created fear, and treated sinners as enemies rather than people who need Christ.

Truth without love is cruelty.

Love without truth is compromise.

Jesus calls us to both: truth *and* love.

The person who has harmed us is still made in God's image, still someone Christ calls us to love, still someone who can repent, still someone for whom Christ died.

9. What Does This Mean for Us?

So what do we do with this teaching? It's not like we are going to be practicing this on a weekly basis. But the outline of this process is useful in our daily lives.

I think there are five good points for us in this:

First, be willing to confront sin lovingly. If someone is destroying their life gambling their life away, do not simply gossip. Pray. Speak. Listen. Encourage.

Second, be willing to *receive* correction yourself. None of us likes being confronted. Our first instinct is often defensiveness. But sometimes God uses another Christian to show us something we cannot see ourselves. A mature response is: "Maybe they're right. Maybe I need to change something."

Third, resist gossip. If Jesus says, "Go to him privately," then spreading the story everywhere is not obedience.

Fourth, practice forgiveness. Forgiveness does not always mean removing every boundary or pretending nothing happened. But it does mean refusing to live in hatred and vengeance.

Fifth, take repentance seriously. Every Christian sins. The question is not "Have you ever sinned?" The question is "When you sin, will you turn back to Christ?" The Christian life is not sinless perfection. It is continual repentance

Closing

Because Christ has come, we live differently.

Because Christ is returning, we live differently.

Because we belong to Christ, we live differently.

That includes the way we treat one another when we believe we have been sinned against.

We do not hide sin.

We do not celebrate sin.

We do not destroy sinners.

We do not gossip about sinners.

We do not give up on sinners.

We *are* sinners.

Instead:

When a brother sins, go to him.

When a sister falls, seek her restoration.

When someone needs correction, speak the truth in love.

When repentance comes, forgive.

And when someone stubbornly refuses repentance, the church may have to exercise itself through this full process.

But even then, the goal is not hatred, revenge, or humiliation.

The goal is repentance and restoration.

The church is not a museum for perfect people.

It is a community of sinners who have been rescued by grace—a place where one beggar can tell another beggar where food is to be found. Amen.

Song: *Lord, make us servants of your peace* (739)

We respond to serve God

Our time of giving

**HOW TO SUPPORT DAYSPRING'S
MINISTRY & MISSION**

1. Place a donation in the Offering Plate as you leave the Sanctuary via the centre door. Use the Yellow envelopes (add Name & Address) or your numerically identified personal Offering Envelope if you want a tax receipt.
2. Use Pre-authorized remittance or e-transfer (call the Church Office on Wed or Thurs for info).
3. Click the Donate button on our website (bottom right at www.DayspringChurch.ca).
4. On Sundays, ask the Media Team how to use the machine in the Media Room.

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

God of compassion and steadfast love,
we bring before you the needs of your world, our communities, and our own lives.
We pray for the peoples of Ukraine and Russia.

As diplomatic efforts continue and temporary pauses in strikes are sought,
we ask for genuine steps toward a just and lasting peace.

Comfort those who mourn the dead, protect the displaced and the wounded, and give
wisdom and courage to all who work for an end to the violence.

We pray for the Middle East, especially where tensions between the United States and
Iran have intensified this week.

Where missiles fly and ships are struck, protect the innocent, restrain the powerful, and
guide leaders toward paths of de-escalation and justice rather than deeper conflict.

We remember the people of Nepal still recovering from devastating floods and
landslides.

For those who have lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods;

for the injured and the missing;

and for the rescue workers and aid teams who continue their difficult work—grant
strength, comfort, and the resources needed for recovery.

Closer to home, we pray for communities in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton dealing with flooding and the aftermath of severe weather.

Protect those still at risk, support emergency responders, and provide help for families whose homes and daily lives have been disrupted.

We pray for our own city of Edmonton and for Dayspring Presbyterian Church.

Be near to all who are ill, grieving, lonely, or anxious.

Guide our leaders in church and community.

Help us to be a people of welcome, reconciliation, and practical love.

We hold in silence the names and needs known to us...

(brief silence)

All these prayers, spoken and unspoken, we offer in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Passing the peace

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Invitation

This is the joyful feast of the people of God.

Men and women, youth and children,
come from the east and the west, from the north and the south,
and gather about Christ's table.

This is not a Presbyterian table, nor the table of this congregation alone.

It is the Lord's Table,

and all who trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour,

or who desire to trust him more fully,

are welcome to receive the bread and the cup.

Come, not because you must, but because you may.

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because you have any claim on heaven's rewards,
but because in your frailty and sin you stand in need of God's mercy and help.

Come, and find welcome.

Song: *I come with joy* (vrs 1,2,4,5 : 530)

The Apostles' Creed See viewscreen 539

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. AMEN.

The Communion Prayer

Eternal God,
we give you thanks and praise.
You created the heavens and the earth
and made us in your image.
When we turned away,
you did not abandon us,
but sent your Son, Jesus Christ,
to live among us,
to die for us,
and to rise again,
opening the way to life everlasting.
Send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon these gifts of bread and wine,
that they may be for us
the body and blood of Christ,
and that we may be nourished in faith,
united in love,
and strengthened for service in the world.
Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour are yours,
almighty God,
now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

On the night he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread,
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
"This is my body, which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."
In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
The gifts of God for all God's people. Amen.

Sharing of the Bread and Wine

Song: *Eat this bread (527)*

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God,
we give you thanks that in this sacrament
you have fed us with the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ.
By your Holy Spirit, strengthen the ties that bind us to him and to one another.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live as faithful disciples,
to love as we have been loved,
and to serve a world still waiting for your peace and justice. Amen.

Song: *Worship the Lord* (555)

Sending out with God's blessing

May God, the Source of Love,
Christ, the Face of Love in action,
and the Spirit, the transforming power of love,
go with you to bless you
and move through you to heal and bless God's world.

Response: *Benediction (as you go)*

Music postlude

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