

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity

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Date: 24 August 2025

Preacher: Seminarian Matthew Stuart

[0 : 0 0] In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. Please be seated. It is unsettling to me that in the Gospel reading that we find in Luke chapter 22 verses 24 through 30, Jesus is just hours away from his betrayal and crucifixion.

Yet his disciples are arguing over which of them should be considered the greatest. Luke alone records this dispute in the upper room after the supper, not before, as we see in Matthew and Mark. By placing it here, Luke turns an ugly moment in the history of the Twelve into an ongoing warning for the church. Every time we gather at our Lord's table, these words serve as a reminder that jealousy and the desire for power were not only issues for the first followers of Jesus, but they remain problems even today.

The rest of the New Testament, church history, and modern ecclesiastical issues all demonstrate this persistent disease among many who lead Christ's church.

But it also applies to all the baptized. Our Lord responds not with anger, but with a firm and loving rebuke. He points to the kings of the Gentiles, rulers who exercise lordship over them and who are called benefactors.

[1 : 5 0] In the ancient world, that was a title that was used by leaders who demanded loyalty in exchange for favors. The kind of authority that seeks honor, recognition, and control.

But not so among you, Jesus says. On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.

We see in verse 26. In the ancient world, the youngest were considered the lowest, without any privilege or claim. The one who serves, the table waiter, ranked beneath the one reclining at the meal.

Yet Jesus turns this kind of thinking on its head. For who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table?

Yet I am among you as the one who serves. He is the eternal son, worshipped by angels, equal to the father in glory.

[3 : 0 4] Yet he stoops down to wash his disciples' feet. He came not to be served, but to serve.

And to give his life as a ransom for many. This is not merely a prelude to greater things. In Christ's kingdom, this humble service is the greater thing.

Earlier this morning, we witnessed the manifestation of the kingdom itself before our very eyes. As baby Ambrose was brought to the font of holy baptism.

In baptism, God claimed this little one as his own. Washed away his sin. United him to Christ's death and resurrection. And granted him the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In that moment, the seal of Christ was set upon his soul. A seal that can never be erased. And he was made a full member of Christ's body.

[4 : 1 2] The church. However, this was not just an initiation into a new life. It was a commissioning into a life of service.

And in that moment, the parents and the godparents vowed to raise Ambrose to walk in the way of Christ.

Which is a life of sacrifice. The life of every saint is a witness to what vows are meant to become. And today we celebrate the feast of Saint Bartholomew. Who lived this out. Though the scriptures tell us little about him.

Beyond his name and identity as Nathaniel. The Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit. As described in John chapter 1 verse 47.

[5 : 1 0] The tradition of the church remembers his service and his sacrifice. After Pentecost, he traveled far and wide to preach the gospel.

With some accounts placing him in India and others in Armenia. His witness ended in martyrdom. Being flayed alive for Christ's sake.

Bartholomew's greatness wasn't merely measured by the world's idea of greatness. But by offering himself completely to the one who served us first.

Jesus goes on to encourage his disciples. But you are those who have continued with me in my trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom.

Just as my father bestowed one upon me. That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[6 : 14] It's a complete reversal of what came before. In Christ's kingdom, true place and honor are never taken by force.

But given by God to those who have chosen a life of self-sacrifice for his sake. The crowns and thrones he promised are part of the final joy of the saints.

A pure gift from the Lord to all who have walked with him till the end. The pattern is the same for us. Every baptized Christian is called to this servant leadership. Whether in the home, the workplace, the parish, or the wider world.

The measure of our faithfulness is not how many serve us. But how many we serve in Christ's name.

[7 : 16] Parents serve by teaching and guiding their children. Ministers serve by feeding Christ's flock in word and sacrament. All of us serve by bearing one another's burdens.

Giving generously and seeking the good of others before ourselves. This is the life into which we have been baptized.

It is the life St. Bartholomew lived to the very end. And it is the life Jesus lived for us. Stooping low. Pouring himself out. And promising that those who follow him in humble service. Will share his joy. And sit at his table in the kingdom.

So let us abandon the world's ideal of greatness. Which chases after wealth and recognition. Let us embrace the greatness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[8 : 21] Who knelt down to serve. Even to the point of death upon the cross. And let us remember. As we think of little Ambrose being baptized this morning.

That this is the way of glory. The way of the saints. The way of life everlasting. Amen. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Amen.