

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17, 2025
TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LUKE 12:49-56 | "CAST FIRE"



ST. JOHN
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(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in **bold** print

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE LESSONS

ISAIAH 5:1-7 The prophet speaks of Israel in the parable of the vineyard.

HEBREWS 11:29-12:2 Heroes of the ancient faith are listed by name or by their destiny to complete the honor roll begun in the previous lesson.

LUKE 12:49-56 Jesus speaks of the divisions that the call to discipleship may bring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "You Raise Me Up" Brendan Graham &
Rolf Loveland

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Our Church's Wider Mission

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:(Inspired by Psalm 80)**

One: Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven and see; have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted.

Many: The world is ablaze around us with pain and suffering, natural disasters and human schemes, injustice and brokenness.

One: Create again, O God of Fire; respond to the needs of your people and shepherd us to be good stewards of your creation.

Many: Let your Holy Fire meet the infernos that seek to consume us with refining and renewing power.

One: Redeem again, O God of hosts; ignite a flame within your kingdom that will spread as a wildfire of righteousness and love.

Many: Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved.

***INVOCATION:**

God of Fire, we recognize the spark that you bring into our gathering. Let it ignite within us as we worship you in the company of siblings. We honor your power and remain in awe of your glory. Let it fall again as Spirit dwells among us. May the warmth of your presence give us courage for these days and the clarity of your light give us discernment toward a future with hope. Be pleased by our worship, Eternal God, and be glorified in our praise. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 204 "Take Up Thy Cross"**

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Transforming One, forgive us for dampening your fire, even for our failure to recognize your movement among us. Help us to follow in the path of life abundantly for our neighbors and ourselves. Make us instruments of your kingdom as we encourage and uplift one another like iron sharpens iron. Surround us as a community of accountability and support to transform us in your image, character, and nature. We receive the gift of new grace, new mercies, and new life that you offer to us each day. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, in Jeremiah 23:29, the Voice declares, "Is not my word like fire, says the LORD, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" We may be assured of God's power to break down in order to build back up. The brokenness we

experience in life does not have the final word. For the redemptive love of God makes all things new and the healing grace of God restores and repairs. New life in Christ awaits us all this day and every day.

***GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator,
and the Christ and the Spirit so near.
As it was from the start so it shall be forever,
One God always here. (repeat twice)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON FROM FIRT TESTAMENT:

Isaiah 5:1-7 From the Message

Looking for a Crop of Justice

5¹⁻² I'll sing a ballad to the one I love,
a love ballad about his vineyard:
The one I love had a vineyard,
a fine, well-placed vineyard.
He hoed the soil and pulled the weeds,
and planted the very best vines.
He built a lookout, built a winepress,
a vineyard to be proud of.
He looked for a vintage yield of grapes,
but for all his pains he got garbage grapes.
3-4 "Now listen to what I'm telling you,
you who live in Jerusalem and Judah.
What do you think is going on
between me and my vineyard?
Can you think of anything I could have done
to my vineyard that I didn't do?

When I expected good grapes,
why did I get bitter grapes?

⁵⁻⁶ “Well now, let me tell you
what I’ll do to my vineyard:

I’ll tear down its fence
and let it go to ruin.

I’ll knock down the gate
and let it be trampled.

I’ll turn it into a patch of weeds, untended, uncared for—
thistles and thorns will take over.

I’ll give orders to the clouds:

‘Don’t rain on that vineyard, ever!’”

⁷ Do you get it? The vineyard of God-of-the-Angel-Armies
is the country of Israel.

All the men and women of Judah
are the garden he was so proud of.

He looked for a crop of justice
and saw them murdering each other.

He looked for a harvest of righteousness
and heard only the moans of victims.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 80:1-2, 8-19 Page 672

EPISTEL LESSON: Hebrews 11:29-12:2

²⁹ By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if they were on dry
land, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were drowned.

³⁰ By faith Jericho’s walls fell after the people marched
around them for seven days.

³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute wasn’t killed with the
disobedient because she welcomed the spies in peace.

³² What more can I say? I would run out of time if I told you
about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and
the prophets. ³³ Through faith they conquered kingdoms,
brought about justice, realized promises, shut the mouths
of lions, ³⁴ put out raging fires, escaped from the edge of the
sword, found strength in weakness, were mighty in war, and
routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead
by resurrection. Others were tortured and refused to be
released so they could gain a better resurrection.

³⁶ But others experienced public shame by being taunted
and whipped; they were even put in chains and in
prison. ³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were cut in two,
and they died by being murdered with swords. They went
around wearing the skins of sheep and goats, needy,
oppressed, and mistreated. ³⁸ The world didn’t deserve
them. They wandered around in deserts, mountains, caves,
and holes in the ground.

³⁹ All these people didn’t receive what was promised,
though they were given approval for their faith. ⁴⁰ God
provided something better for us so they wouldn’t be made
perfect without us.

Let’s also run the race

12 So then, with endurance, let’s also run the race that is
laid out in front of us, since we have such a great cloud of
witnesses surrounding us. Let’s throw off any extra baggage,
get rid of the sin that trips us up, ² and fix our eyes on Jesus,
faith’s pioneer and perfecter. He endured the cross, ignoring
the shame, for the sake of the joy that was laid out in front
of him, and sat down at the right side of God’s throne.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 12:49-56**

Conflicts brought by Jesus

⁴⁹ “I came to cast fire upon the earth. How I wish that it was already ablaze! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism I must experience. How I am distressed until it’s completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, I have come instead to bring division. ⁵² From now on, a household of five will be divided—three against two and two against three. ⁵³ Father will square off against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; and mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”

Learning and practicing good judgment

⁵⁴ Jesus also said to the crowds, “When you see a cloud forming in the west, you immediately say, ‘It’s going to rain.’ And indeed it does. ⁵⁵ And when a south wind blows, you say, ‘A heat wave is coming.’ And it does. ⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You know how to interpret conditions on earth and in the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret the present time?

MESSAGE: We Must Choose

I don’t know about you, but I found this scripture passage as very upsetting. Is that really might sweet Jesus who said, “I came to cast fire upon the earth!” If he was trying to wake up all those people who have been following him all over the country, I’m sure he accomplished this “wake up call.” Are you awake after hearing his words?”

I think these words of Jesus had something to do with his lack of time he had to spend with these crowds. Jesus is heading toward Jerusalem where he knows he will be

betrayed, put on trial, and crucified. Jesus had very little time left to inform all those disciples and people why he came; he came to teach and heal and save them from all their sins. He came to bring the kingdom of God closer to each person he preached to. And now the time has come for all those people and for us, to make a decision! We need to choose! Will we follow Jesus or will we go back home, and go back to the way we used to live before we ever heard of a man named Jesus?

The people around Jesus were learning to regard Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. When they heard today’s words from Jesus, I’m sure they were shocked. Those people regarded the Messiah as conqueror and king, and the Messianic age as a golden time.

In Jewish thought fire is almost always the symbol of *judgment*. So then, Jesus regarded the coming of his kingdom as a time of judgment. The Jews firmly believed that God would judge other nations by one standard and themselves by another; that the very fact they were Jewish would be enough to absolve them. However much we may wish to eliminate the element of judgment from the message of Jesus it remains stubbornly and unalterably there.

Many different translations of our Bible translate verse 50, “I have a baptism to be baptized with.” The Greek verb *baptizein* means to *dip*. In the passive it means to be *submerged*. Often it is used metaphorically. For instance, it is used of a ship sunk beneath the waves. It can be used of someone submerged in drink and therefore dead-drunk. It can be used of the person who is submerged in some grim

and terrible experience – someone who can say, “all the waves and billows are gone over me.”

This is the way in which Jesus uses it here. “I have,” he said, “a terrible experience through which I must pass; and life is full of tension until I pass through it and emerge triumphantly from it.” The cross was constantly before his eyes. How different from the Jewish idea of God’s King! Jesus came not with avenging armies and flying banners, but to give life as ransom for many.

His coming would inevitably mean division; in point of fact it did and still does. I’m sure many of us have family members who don’t agree with us when it comes to our faith. That was one of the great reasons why the Romans hated Christianity – it tore families in two. Over and over again people had to decide whether they loved their families better than their loved Christ. The essence of Christianity is that loyalty to Christ has to take precedence over the dearest loyalties of this earth. We must be prepared to count all things but loss for the excellence of Jesus Christ. We all must choose. And we should make that decision the sooner the better. Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC: “Ain’t That Good News” Video

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Our gracious creator, we are here to speak the prayers of the people. What is on our minds? Do we have words of thanksgiving to our God for blessings we have received? Or are we consumed with worry and we are sending our prayers to you for relief from these worries? It seems there

are always situations and circumstances which keep on our knees in prayer to you.

All nature on our beautiful earth are in danger of disappearing due to human misuse. There are always people suffering from some illness or injury. There is always people who are starving and are in danger of dying from lack of food and water. There are always people suffering with mental illness, or are lonely or grieving. There are always unemployed people and some who have no where to live. Today we pray for all of them.

We bring all our concerns and prayers to the feet of our Savior who taught us to pray. . .

OUR LORD’S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 769

**Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God.
Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

May the gifts we have be the gifts we use to supply the needs of the community. When we employ generosity, we resist the powers of evil, reject the lie of scarcity, and assert trust in the God who provides. May our gifts reflect the blessings we have received and the faith that we proclaim.

OFFERTORY: “I Need Thee Every Hour” Robert Lowery

***DOXOLOGY:**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

***UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Holy, Holy, Holy God, who provides, who gifts, and who refines. We offer these gifts to you in gratitude and hope. May they extend beyond the walls of our sanctuaries so that your name will be known through us. May they spark hope and joy to dispel despair and despondency. May needs be met and lives changed through our giving and our living. Receive these gifts as our tangible prayer that your kingdom come and will be done. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 493 “O Jesus, I Have Promised”**

***BENEDICTION:**

As you go, cast fire
To burn the acceptance of injustice
To illuminate the way of peace
To warm the bonds of human connection
To clear the path to a new world
We build together

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: “Let There Be Peace in Earth”

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: “Exaltation” Robert J. Hughes