

of the people, Jesus ate with those whom the leadership considered beneath themselves. Then there is the issue of Jesus ignoring a fasting day. The leadership had created rules and they expected them to be followed without question. John followed the man-made rules but Jesus didn't (more control issues.) The good news is that God doesn't follow man-made rules. He not only eats with us, He feeds us on the Body and Blood of His Only-Begotten-Son that we are kept with Him. Your faith offends the Pharisees. Your faith pleases God the Father. There is nothing we can do to pay God back for what He has done, but every day in every way, we try to live up to His expectation.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Ⓟ Blessed are You, O Lord, and blessed is Your Holy name. You forgive all our iniquities and heal our diseases. You redeem us from destruction and crown us with steadfast Love and mercy. You renew our youth like the eagle's by satisfying us with good things. You do not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. Accept, O Lord, our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

We confess that our lives have not always been letters of recommendation. We have often been guilty of trying to keep the letter of the Law, while forgetting its spirit. As letters of Christ to a world lost in religious confusion, our testimony leaves much to be desired. We have often attempted to mend the flaws in our lives with patches of our own good works. For our failure to live up to Your expectations, forgive us, O Lord.

Visit us with Your Holy Spirit, and change our hearts to love You more completely. Help us rejoice in Your mercy as revealed to us by Your Son Jesus Christ. Grant us serenity in the midst of trials and afflictions. Give us power to be worthy examples of Your Love in a loveless world. Permeate the councils of nations and of our own nation with Your spirit of justice, mercy, and forgiveness.

Through Your beloved Son Jesus Christ, You have revealed Your Word in the flesh. Send us Your Holy Spirit that we may hear Him speaking to us in Your Word. Give us the courage to hold high the light of Your Word to those who sit in darkness, and bless it in the hearts of those who hear it.

Extend Your healing hand to the sick, help them know the power of Christ. Enter with Your presence for the lonely, help them feel the presence of Christ. Be the life of the bereaved, help them know the wonder of eternal life. Grant Your aid to the hungry, the homeless, the stranger, the oppressed, the orphan and the imprisoned.

Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. **(Time of silent prayer.)**

In the most Holy name of Jesus we pray.

© Amen.

EPIPHANY EIGHT

Chant Tone



Introit

Let Your priests be clothed with
| righteousness,*
and let Your saints | shout for joy.

For the Lord has chosen — Zion;*
He has desired it for His | dwelling
place:

"This is My resting place for — ever;*
here I will dwell, for I have de | sired it.

I will abundantly bless her pro — visions;*
I will satisfy her | poor with bread.

Her priests I will clothe with sal — vation,*
and her saints will | shout for joy.

There I will make a horn to sprout for
— David;*

I have prepared a lamp for my
a — nointed.

His enemies I will | clothe with shame,*
but on him his | crown will shine."

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy — Spirit;

as it was in the be — ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. — Amen.

Let Your priests be clothed with
| righteousness,*
and let Your saints | shout for joy.*

*(Antiphon, Psalm 132:9;
Psalm 132:13-18)*

Collect of the Day

O Lord, mercifully hear our prayers and having set us free from the bonds of our sins deliver us from every evil; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Praise the Lord, all — nations!*

Extol Him, all — peoples!

For great is His | Love toward us,*

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for — ever.

Ascribe to the Lord the glory | due His name;*

bring an offering and come in | to His courts!

(Psalm 117:1-2a; 96:8)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: Lord God, You know what I am, give me the courage to face the truth about myself. Keep me from pride and deceit. Do not permit me to make my life counterfeit or to hide behind some cheap pretense. In the crucified Christ let me see the depth of my sin, the grossness of my selfishness, and the judgment of death I deserve. In the risen Christ let me see the new life You have given me by Your grace, experiencing the deliverance from my old self and the freedom to live for You. With the mind of Christ ruling me, let me be honest with You, with myself, and with all people. In the every exalted name of Christ I pray. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE FALL INTO SIN TOOK SO MUCH AWAY FROM US; THINGS THAT ARE ONLY REPLACED THROUGH THE LIFE OF JESUS.

We live in a world that only honors the efforts of our hands. In a recent "Dilbert" the question was, would we want to be paid a handsome salary even if all our efforts were worthless, or would we put up with poverty if all our ideas were wildly successful and used immediately. The question for a Christian is not one of sacrifice and reward but mercy and life with God. The call of Matthew into the holy ministry is a perfect example of God calling and ordaining exactly whom He will choose. Matthew was looked down on because of his status, but God had placed Matthew in this position for exactly the moment of his call. We are where we are that God will work through us to accomplish His purpose in the world.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Called To Be Loved

INTROIT—(Antiphon: Psalm 132:9;) Psalm 132:13-18

Written by David, he mentioned a promise God made to him ("horn to sprout".) This appears to have been a daily prayer of David seeking to commend the place where the Messiah would be found ("lamp for my anointed.") David was not allowed to build the temple in Jerusalem, but he did many things in anticipation. We are brought to the place where Jesus dwells with us each time we enter into worship.

COLLECT

We ask for release from our sins and a strong defense against all evil.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Hosea 2:14-20

A reading from the book of Hosea is assigned to Proper 5A along with this Sunday and (because they use the same lessons) Proper 3B. This means that in the majority of years, we won't hear from Hosea. He was the last prophet to the 10 northern tribes before they were overrun and disappeared. Hosea was instructed to marry a prostitute as an example to the people of unfaithfulness. Basically this section is God promised to take the faithful into a land of wonder and justice.

GRADUAL—Psalm 117:1-2a, 96:8

Psalm 117 praises God for adding to our daily blessings by making us into His people. Psalm 96 looks to the reign of the Christ.

EPISTLE LESSON—2 Corinthians 2:12–3:6

This is like reading a letter from a friend. Paul explained his emotions and in doing so gives us an insight into his personal struggle. Paul was very human. He expected to find Titus and was disappointed when it didn't happen. Then Paul gave us the most important message. As a Christian it is difficult to give the good news to unbelievers because to them we smell like death. The law is all about destruction (Hosea proclaimed destruction, Jesus brought destruction to the ruling order.) When we gather as the redeemed we smell like life, because death was washed away in the water and word of our Baptism.

GOSPEL LESSON—Mark 2:13-22

There are multiple things happening in our Gospel Lesson for today. One of the suggestions is to cut off verses 13-17. First we have the call of Matthew. The response of Matthew is immediate (but honestly, everything in Mark happens immediately.) The Pharisees were upset because Jesus didn't consult with the leaders in this call. They would never have allowed Him to call a tax-collector. Then there is the section of the banquet. There are a couple of issues bothering the Pharisees: They were losing control