

Third Sunday after Pentecost [a]

Trinity Lutheran, Alamogordo

June 14, 2026

Exodus 19:2-8

² They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, ³ while Moses went up to God. **The LORD called to [Moses] out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."** ⁷ So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸ All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.

Romans 5:6-15

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. ¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned-- ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

In the Name of Jesus.

Where can we find God's hand?

This world we are in, this world of an unjust killing we can all see on the news, of the tears of a child, of a brother, shed for the unjust loss of a loved one, this world of an innocent young woman stabbed on a subway, of shop owners seeing their family's property taken away by looters and rioters, this world of neighbors isolated from one another because of a political division, of politicians saying they

will “fight for you,” even though they won’t even fight to save a little child from the abortionist, this world of all the deceit and injustice—where do we find our Lord’s hand in this world we are in?

Our Lord loves this world, we know that. He so loved the world that he sent his only begotten Son so that we would not die but will live eternally.

With all the sickness and death, the injustice and violence, the fear and despair, our Lord loves this world, loving every person, even to the point of sending his Son die for the ungodly.

So where do we find our Lord’s hand in this world?

Our Lord’s hand *is* in this world. He created it, he loves it, and even when we took creation into sin and death, he entered it, becoming Man, to redeem it.

Now we may see his hand in our world.

We can speak of his hand in two ways: his left-hand and his right hand.

So, we speak of our Lord’s left-hand kingdom and his right-hand kingdom.

The left-hand kingdom is the kingdom of the Law, of justice and retribution—it’s the kingdom of earthly governments and authorities. [Romans 13:1-4]

It’s the kingdom of the sword, the kingdom of the police officer who pulls me over for speeding, the judge who throws into prison for murder or harassment, the state sending a bill to pay your taxes, the bank making me sign a contract for a loan, the teacher giving an “A” to the student who turns in the perfect essay, a “D” to the student turning in only half the homework.

The left kingdom is the kingdom of a man protecting his home from thievery and violence, a store expecting me to pay for the bread I take home, of voters turning out of office the mayor and council members who hire a police chief who doesn’t train the officers to protect the innocent, a D.A. who prosecutes a man for voting illegally.

The left-hand is not about mercy and grace. It is the kingdom of earthly governance, the kingdom of the sword of justice, it is known by its power and retribution.

And, in all of this, we have said nothing yet about the Church.

Our Lord’s right-hand kingdom, it is the kingdom of grace. It is not of earthly governments and authorities. It is the Church.

It speaks not retribution, but mercy.

Its sword is not the sword made of steel, but is the Word of Law and Gospel.

It comes not in power, but in weakness.

Our Lord's right-hand kingdom comes not from the halls of Washington D.C., nor Santa Fe, but from the pulpit proclaiming the Gospel, from the pastor's mouth preaching Christ-crucified—the Lord's right hand kingdom is the Lord gathering his people to the Table of his Body and Blood for the forgiveness of sin.

Our Lord's right-hand kingdom will never be understood by the government, for the Church knows no retribution, no violence, no action of power, no coercion, or else it's not the Church.

The Church knows the voice of Christ, who did not crush the ungodly with retribution, but who, while we were still weak, at the right time, died for the ungodly. [Romans 5:6]

The Church lives by the Word of Christ, who justified us not by pronouncing the sentence of death upon the heads of those who deserve death, but who justified us with his own blood. [Romans 5:10]

The Church lives as those who have been made members of the Church not by the citizenship of where we were born nor by the citizenship of earthly allegiance, but by the Name the Lord placed on us in Baptism.

The Church is those who were under the sentence of death which reigned over all people from Adam, but who have now been called out of that reign into the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of the man Jesus Christ. [Romans 5:15]

You are the Church. What is your role in this world?

You live in the left-hand kingdom and in the right-hand kingdom, simultaneously.

You live in the left-hand kingdom by your life of flesh, by your daily life under the Law. You live in the left-hand according to all the things of this world: the governmental authorities, the contracts you make with your neighbor, the food you buy, the doctor you see, the wealth you earn for your family, and the property and home and business you protect.

At the same time, you live in the right-hand kingdom, the kingdom of grace. You live in the right-hand kingdom according to your life of faith. You live in the right-hand kingdom by the life given you in Baptism, by your hearing of Christ's Word of forgiveness and reconciliation, by your eating and drinking of his Body and Blood for your justification.

And, so, as you live your life of faith, your life in the right-hand kingdom, what is God doing with you in the left-hand kingdom?

Exodus 19:6:

[The Lord said, to Israel,] **“You shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the Earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”**

In this world of the left-hand, this world of Law, of power and retribution, this world where sin can only be restrained outwardly by the exercise of the sword, in the midst of this world, the Lord has his holy people, a kingdom of priests—it is his Israel.

At the time of Moses, Israel was those who bore the Name of the Lord by circumcision into the covenant. And that covenant, which was the promise of salvation, was in place up until the crucifixion of Jesus.

Now, *after* the crucifixion of Jesus, the Lord’s Israel are those given his Name in Baptism.

Baptism is the new circumcision. [Colossians 2:11] Baptism is the promise of the New Israel of faith.

The Church is the new Israel.

And you, baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are God’s kingdom of priests, his holy nation.

And, as those bearing the Lord’s Name by Baptism, as those made the Israel of God, his holy people by the blood of Christ, God sets us as his kingdom of priests in a world of sin, his holy people among people who need holiness.

As priests before God, we intercede.

We pray for our neighbor, that where an innocent person woman is killed, the one who killed would be brought to justice, the governmental authorities responsible for protecting us would rightly uphold their offices, and that the grieving families would know the honor of vindication for the victims.

We pray for our neighbor that where a shop owner sees his business looted or put in flames, where a man guarding his store is murdered, those breaking the windows, stealing the goods, lighting the flames, would be held up to earthly justice, and the owners of the businesses and their families would be vindicated.

We pray for our neighbor, that *all* life—the life of the infant, the life of the adult, all life—would be protected and held in honor.

We pray for the president, for the governors, for the mayors, that they would rightly wield the sword for the punishment of those who do evil and the protection of the innocent.

And, as the Lord's priests in this world of sin, as those called into the Church and living our life of faith, our life of the right-hand kingdom of grace, in the midst of the world of the left hand-kingdom of Law—as the Lord's priesthood of the baptized, we pray that all people, of every family, language, and tribe, *all* people would hear the proclamation of Christ Jesus who died for the ungodly, of Christ Jesus who's kingdom is not of the sword, but of grace, who forgives all sin, releases all guilt, and covers all shame, including ours.

In the Name of Jesus.