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Test sermon

CNI · 6 October 2026

KEY VERSE
Matthew 24:13 - "But the one who endures to the end will be saved."

READINGS
Amos 5:18–27; Psalm 106:11–23; Romans 6:15–23; Matthew 24:3–14

20 Sunday after Pentecost

Introduction

We live in a world that is fast-paced, self-centred, and filled with distractions that pull us away from a life of humility, integrity, and spiritual alertness. The 20th Sunday after Pentecost invites us to pause and reflect on how we are preparing for the return of Christ. Are we living lives marked by honesty and godliness, or have we become entangled in complacency and spiritual lethargy? The readings today from Amos, Psalms, Romans, and the Gospel according to Matthew call us to a deeper life of righteousness, integrity, and expectant hope. This message challenges us not to be content with outward religiosity, but to align our hearts and lives with God's righteousness, standing firm in humility, practicing integrity, and being spiritually ready for Christ's return. Let us now explore this calling through four points taken from the day's Scripture readings.

The Danger of Complacency in Worship - (Amos 5:18-27)

The prophet Amos confronts a people who longed for the "Day of the Lord" but did not realize the implications of their hypocrisy. They performed religious rituals but lacked justice and righteousness in their daily lives. In verse 21, God says, "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies." Amos's words are a sobering warning for all believers. God does not delight in empty religious expressions. He desires justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (v.24). A church that does not live with integrity and humility is merely playing religion. A man may attend church every Sunday, sing hymns passionately, and give generously to the offering, yet if he is dishonest in his business dealings or neglects the poor, his worship is hollow. God seeks people whose lives match their words. Humility requires us to examine ourselves and to turn away from pretension. It is a daily surrender that says, "Lord, not my will, but Yours be done." When we practice humility, we make room for God's Spirit to work within us.

Interceding in Times of Rebellion - (Psalm 106:11-23)

Psalm 106 is a poetic summary of Israel's repeated failures, yet also God's persistent grace. The people forgot God's deliverance at the Red Sea, worshiped idols, and provoked God with their disobedience. Yet in verse 23, we see the power of intercession: "Therefore he said he would destroy them - had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him." Here, we see the power of spiritual leaders and intercessors who humbly stand between a sinful people and a righteous God. Integrity involves not just personal righteousness but taking responsibility for the spiritual state of others. A faithful pastor once said, "My people may forget to pray for themselves, but I will not

forget to pray for them." Like Moses, we are called to "stand in the breach," praying and living with integrity not just for ourselves but for our communities. This Psalm reminds us that humility involves recognizing our constant need for God's mercy. Integrity is revealed not when we are perfect but when we are honest about our failures and keep returning to God.

Freedom for Righteous Living - (Romans 6:15-23)

Paul addresses a critical misunderstanding of grace. He asks, "Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!" (v.15). The Apostle makes it clear: grace is not a license to sin but a call to live righteously. He contrasts slavery to sin and slavery to righteousness. Living with integrity means choosing righteousness daily. In verse 22, Paul says, "But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life." Imagine a man released from prison who keeps returning to his old habits because he doesn't know how to live free. That is often our spiritual struggle. We are free in Christ, but we must choose to walk in that freedom with integrity, humility, and readiness. Righteous living is not about perfection but direction. Are we daily submitting ourselves to God, growing in holiness, and choosing righteousness over rebellion?

Living in Readiness for Christ - (Matthew 24:3-14)

In this powerful passage, Jesus teaches His disciples about the signs of the end times and the importance of staying vigilant. He warns of false prophets, wars, famines, persecution, and the increase of wickedness. But He also gives hope: "But the one who endures to the end will be saved." Jesus is not calling us to live in fear but in faith. Readiness for Christ involves watchfulness, endurance, and unwavering commitment to the truth. It is about being faithful in the small things, even when the world seems to crumble around us. A watchman on a city wall doesn't sleep when danger is near. His eyes are alert, his spirit ready. We too must be like spiritual watchmen, keeping our hearts alert, our hands busy with God's work, and our eyes fixed on the hope of Christ's return. Humility acknowledges our dependence on God. Integrity keeps us from drifting into moral compromise. Readiness urges us to persevere with joy and faithfulness until the very end.

Conclusion

The message of the 20th Sunday after Pentecost is a wake-up call to live differently in a world that constantly tempts us to live for ourselves. God is not looking for perfection but for people who are humble, honest, and ready. The return of Christ is not a vague concept but a spiritual reality that calls us to action now. Let us therefore:

Worship with hearts that pursue justice, not just rituals.

Intercede with love and humility for a broken world.

Live in the freedom of righteousness, not the chains of sin.

Stay ready with faith, endurance, and integrity.

Prayer

Gracious and righteous God, we thank You for calling us to a life of humility, integrity, and

readiness for Your return. Cleanse us from all hypocrisy, and help us to live not in outward religiosity but with hearts set on You. Teach us to walk in Your righteousness, to intercede for others in love, and to endure in faith even in difficult times. Fill us with the hope of Your coming and the joy of Your salvation. May we be found faithful when You return. In Jesus' name, Amen.