Devotional Reflection, Monday, August 17, 2026
Proper 15, the week of the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Emulating the Model Servant

Key phrases for reflection from today's Gospel reading:
19Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. 20The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished.

You will find the full text of today's Gospel at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings (*BCP*, 981)
AM Psalm 106:1-18; PM Psalm 106:19-48
Judges 17:1-13; Acts 7:44-8:1a; John 5:19-29

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare. (See below.)

David's Reflections

The Cambridge New Testament scholar of the mid twentieth century, Charles Harold Dodd, believed that there was a hidden parable in this passage. He saw verses 19-20 as the parable of the apprentice son. Jesus grew up as the son of an artisan, Joseph the carpenter. In that culture, crafts were hereditary, passed on from father to son.

As Joseph's son and apprentice, Jesus would have learned the craft of carpentry by watching his father and by doing exactly as his father instructed him. Perhaps we hear an echo of Jesus' childhood in the words, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing;"

What a remarkable window into the spiritual experience and the self-perception of Jesus. This little parable makes the connection between his childhood experience of the craft shop and his experience of God's calling and the Spirit's workings within his life. He was empowered to give live and to judge by the Father, and he acted only as he knew the Father willed. His actions were those of the Father acting in and through him. As John 1:18 put it, "No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, he has made him known."

Today's Gospel, a dialogue, follows the healing of a lame man on the Sabbath. In the dialogue, Jesus responds to the criticism of the religious leaders that he has violated the Sabbath; their argument--physicians have six days to work cures, and should not on the Sabbath unless life is in danger. This little parable lies at the heart of Jesus' response. His Father carries on the work of salvation and judgment seven days a week, and Jesus was doing only what he saw the Father doing.

In John's Gospel, Jesus' relationship with God models what ours is to be. What a challenge for me this text presents, if viewed in that light. My life is to be one of seeing what God does, especially as revealed in Jesus' life, of having God, my father and mother, show me exactly what God wants me to do and then doing it. How do I know what God, the master carpenter, wants me to do. Jesus embodied God's will, and I have a very good view of the Son through the Gospels. I also have a good view of the lifestyles of Jesus' earliest followers in The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of the New Testament. And, I have the examples of devoted people in my past and present.

My servanthood, my relationships, my spirituality, my commitment--Jesus shows me what they are to be like and shares his life with me so that I can spend mine learning how to do what I see God doing in and through Jesus. "As the Father has sent me, so send I you.", the Jesus of John says at the end of this Gospel.

"In the Carpenter's Shop"

"I wish I had been His apprentice,
To see Him each morning at seven,
As He tossed his gray tunic about Him,

The Master of earth and of Heaven.
When He lifted the lid of His workchest,
And opened His carpenter's kit,
And looked at His chisels and augers,
And took the bright tools out of it;
When He gazed at the rising sun tinting
The dew on the opening flowers,
And He smiled at the thought of His Father
Whose love floods this fair world of ours;
Then fastened the apron about Him,
And put on His workingman's cap,
And grasped the smooth haft of His hammer
To give the bent woodwork a tap,
Saying, "Lad, let us finish this ox yoke,
The farmer must finish his crop."
Oh, I wish I had been His apprentice
And worked in the Nazareth shop.
(Anonymous)

Collect of the Day, Proper 15, the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Almighty God, you have given your only Son to be for us a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of godly life: Give us grace to receive thankfully the fruits of his redeeming work, and to follow daily in the blessed steps of his most holy life; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 233)

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare.
http://satucket.com/lectionary/Manteo_Virginia_Dare.htm
https://www.biblehub.org/history/Baptism_on_Roanokes_Shores.htm

Collect of the Feast of the Baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare
O God, you have created every human being in your image and each one is precious in your sight: Grant that in remembering the baptisms of Manteo and Virginia Dare, we may grow in honoring your gift of diversity in human life; become stronger in living out our baptismal vow to respect the dignity of every human being; and bring

into the fellowship of the risen Christ those who come to him in faith, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

A Collect for the Renewal of Life
O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 99)

A Prayer for Seeing Others as Community
Gracious God, thank you for the diversity of human beings that surround me on every side. In the ideas, in the hopes, in the dreams, and in the struggles of those who share this earthly life, let me find that through a community of human beings I am made fuller and more alive. Let the fullness given by community give me the courage to offer my own unique self with humility to the lives of others. As we all share in the life that you have so graciously given us, may we be the lights of your love to one another. Amen.
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http://www.explorefaith.org/prayer/essays/communitypray.html

A Prayer for Light
O Lord God Almighty, as you have taught us to call the evening, the morning, and the noonday one day; and have made the sun to know its going down: Dispel the darkness of our hearts, that by your brightness we may know you to be the true God and eternal light, living and reigning for ever and ever. *Amen.* (BCP, 110)

A Collect for Mission
O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* (BCP, 100, 257)

Daily Office Gospel, John 5:19-29 (NRSV)

19Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. 20The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. 21Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. 22The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 23so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25‘Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself; 27and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29and will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer

Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*