

Home Service for October 25, 2020

Welcome and Announcements

Although we are worshipping in our church building again, some have health reasons that makes it impossible to do so. Others are worried about those who need them with health issues. We want everyone to be comfortable and to be able to worship so the home services will continue so all may be able to worship Our Heavenly God where ever they are. You might notice a few changes. You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship, just like we are doing in the church building.

When we love God and our neighbors, everything changes.

Call to Worship:

God, we know you are with us.
From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.
You have showered your love upon all generations,
since the beginning of time.
From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.
Guide us now through this time of worship,
and into the week ahead.
From everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

Opening Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you command us to remember that the first commandment is to love God with all that we are, our hearts, souls, minds and spirits. The second is equal to this in that this love is to be extended to our neighbors. We are to love as we wish to be loved. Help us to internalize these commandments so that when we encounter times of difficulty, we are again reminded of your everlasting love for us. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Merciful and gracious God, we gather here this day, coming together seeking your healing wisdom. Our lives are filled with anxiety and fear. We turn our backs on people in need and close ourselves away from opportunities to serve. Confusion and anger abound in our nation and in our hearts. Forgive us when we have chosen

the pathways of greed and fear instead of the high way of peace and hope. Bind up our sounds and calm our spirits. Teach us again to turn to you in love. Write the commandment to love our neighbor as we ourselves would want to be loved, as you have loved us. It is in Jesus' name that we offer this prayer. AMEN.

Words of Assurance

God's love has been poured over us to heal and nourish our thirsting spirits. We have been forgiven. Now we are challenged to go forth in peace and hope to a hurting world. Thanks be to God for all God's mercies shown continually to each one of us. AMEN.

Read Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.
² Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
³ You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."
⁴ A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.
⁵ Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:
⁶ In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.
¹³ Relent, LORD! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.
¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.
¹⁵ Make us glad for as many days as you have afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.
¹⁶ May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to their children.
¹⁷ May the favor^[a] of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

Prayers of the People:

In the midst of frightening times when words of war soar to the heavens and anger seems to be the way to treat others and to respond to difficulty, be with us, merciful God. We do not want to live in these hideous ways. We seek your peace and healing love. Our hearts are filled with concern for our families and friends as well as those in far off lands who face great times of difficulties, illness, and mourning. We share the names of those for whom we seek prayers knowing that you hear our cries and respond in love. Let us pray silently for a minute then offer the names of these dear ones. [Silent Prayer].

Yet in the midst of darkness your light of joy abounds within us as we share those moments which have caused us to rejoice in delight and love. Let us pray silently for a minute and then offer instances of joy that we have encountered this week.
[Silent prayer.]

Lord of hope and peace, we have brought before you the names of dear ones on our hearts. Some of the names have been uttered out loud in the congregation; others are whispered in our hearts. Be with all of us, O Lord. Heal our wounds. Direct our lives in pathways of peace. These things we offer in Jesus' name. AMEN.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Lesson: Deuteronomy 34:1-12

Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, ² all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea, ³ the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. ⁴ Then the LORD said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it.”

⁵ And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. ⁶ He buried him^[a] in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. ⁷ Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. ⁸ The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.

⁹ Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit^[b] of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses.

¹⁰ Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, ¹¹ who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. ¹² For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

You know, brothers and sisters, that our visit to you was not without results. ² We had previously suffered and been treated outrageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel in the face of strong opposition. ³ For the appeal we make does not spring from error or impure motives, nor are we trying to trick you. ⁴ On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness. ⁶ We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority. ⁷ Instead, we were like young children^[a] among you.

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, ⁸ so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 22:34-46

Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”^[a] ³⁸ This is the first and greatest

commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[b] ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
⁴¹ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴² “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”
“The son of David,” they replied.
⁴³ He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,
⁴⁴ “‘The Lord said to my Lord:
 “Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
 under your feet.’”^[c]
⁴⁵ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Message

God cares for us, and we are called to show God’s love by caring for one another! That message comes through in each scripture reading. Even in the story of Moses’ death, we are reminded that God’s love has been at work in the world since the beginning of time; from everlasting to everlasting says the psalmist. So how do we respond? The epistle illustrates mutual support and nurture changing lives within the community of faith. As Jesus shows us, the requirements are very simple: Love God fully, and love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

I found a story about a student which can teach us the meaning of this morning’s Gospel. "A newcomer had come to school for the first time. The children all stared. His skin was a different color than their skin, he was small for his age, and he had a club foot. But one girl, Heidi, quickly and easily made friends with this newcomer.

One day on the playground, some of the children began to tease and make fun of this newcomer. Heidi came to his rescue by saying she was still his friend. And she proved her loyalty by playing with him. Still the teasing and name calling persisted. She told the other children to stop, and eventually, the kids got to pushing and shoving, and finally the teacher came to stop the fight. Heidi had stood alone in the fight defending her new found friend

It was unlike Heidi to fight and because her clothes were torn, her teacher called her mom to come to school with clean clothes and to have a talk with Heidi about the fight. After Heidi was all cleaned up, she met with her teacher and mother.

Heidi was asked to describe what had happened and why she did what she did. Her reply was simple. The little boy was her friend. The others should not make fun of him.

"Jesus loves me," said Heidi, "And Jesus loves all the little children. I wanted the other boys and girls to love my friend and be kind to him like I am. He can't help it if his skin is a different color, if he is small and has a funny way of walking."

Heidi was an ordinary girl, but there was something very special about her, she was special because the grace of God had visited her, and she knew about God's love so she could accept and love others, especially this little boy. Heidi was like most little children, but she was also different, because she lived her faith, she lived the love that God has for her through Jesus Christ. Heidi felt good about herself, she felt she had self-worth because of Jesus, so then she could love others with the love of Christ.

She fulfilled Jesus' commandment this morning where Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Heidi knew that Jesus' love shaped her whole life every day.

The Pharisees had 613 directives to clarify and comply with the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments were written to mend that broken relationship between God and man, and restore us to righteousness. Jesus' two greatest commands weren't changes to the God given Directives. Instead, it was the use of different language to explain and reiterate what was already there. Jesus turns what the Pharisees had made into something very difficult into something so simple that everyone could understand with these two sentences, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. "

With these two commandments from Jesus, Jesus made the laws simple for everyone. Love God first, then you will be able to love your neighbor is what Jesus is telling us this morning. But how do we love God? God wants a relationship. Not a passing acquaintance, but the full dedication of our heart, our soul and our body. He wants us to share ourselves as He has shared Himself with us.

He expects us to come to Him because of the love He shares with us. He expects us to build the bond between us by sharing our own love with Him. Jesus was the prime example of that love. He wants us to come to Him. Loving God with all of

one's heart means we love God with a genuine love, with a sincere love, with a love that means something. To love God with one's whole heart means to have an attitude that fears, loves and respects God all the time. Our lives need reflect that love we have for Him every moment of our life.

This kind of loves says it is important for me to be in contact with God, to learn more about him, to become acquainted with him in a very intimate kind of way. It says that I want to go to places where I can find God, and where more especially he can find me.

What does it mean to love God with all of our soul? That means for me, to love him enough to respect his authority, to know what he wants for me as I make the decision of right and wrong in my life.

Jesus doesn't stop here. He says, yes. We are to love God with our, whole heart, with our whole mind, with our whole soul, but then he says the second is like the first. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus is saying that the first commandment is to love God, but equally as important is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Loving ones neighbor is another way that we respond to the love that God has for us. Loving, my neighbor does not, come after I have learned to love God, but it comes along with it. For loving God is not something I have to achieve before I can love my neighbor, but loving God and loving neighbor is all of the same part of the one process. Loving God and loving my neighbor cannot be separated, but must work together as the way we respond to the love of God, as we respond to the saving work of God in our lives.

How simple can it be? "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It is easy. Caring attitudes, caring actions, sharing a part of our life, that's what it's all about. It's giving up a part of ourselves so that we can benefit others and dropping the selfish concerns of our sinful past. It's showing God's love for us to others through our words and our actions. Amen

Benediction:

God's love is sending us forth into the world in ministries of peace and justice. We have received forgiveness and been showered with God's gracious love. Go in peace, bringing hope to this hurting and angry world. AMEN.