

Home Service for 4/18/2021

Welcome and Announcements

You might notice a few changes. You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

For all who lose sight of hope, adjust our perspective, catch our eye, and touch us, risen Savior, with your surprising presence.

Call to Worship:

We are witnesses, to the love God has poured into us. We are witnesses of God's love, sharing it with each person we meet. We are witnesses to everyone we encounter, little children like us, sisters and brothers in God's family.

Opening Prayer:

Come to us, God, for we are waiting; waiting and hoping that your word of peace will soothe our fearful and doubting souls. Open our hearts to the message you would share with us today through song, prayer and meditation that our souls might reach out, touch you, and believe. Help us claim our identity as your beloved children. Help us live into this identity, today and always, that we might radiate your love to others. Come, beloved One, we are here to listen and be transformed. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Wondrous God, we confess that at times our doubts and fears override our hope and faith. Forgive us when we lose sight of the joy of Your love and instead fall into despair and gloom. Lift up our spirits, Lord, and help us to remember the promise of new life here and now, not just the hope of resurrection for the future. We give thanks for Your Son, Jesus the Christ, who continues to offer us new life, who continues to turn us around and upside down, who continues to break down the walls of death in our own life. Forgive us, restore us and renew us. In the name of our risen Savior, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The tomb is empty. The stone is rolled away. There is no darkness now, only light. God continues to renew us and restore us. We are forgiven, loved and restored, receiving the gift and promise of new life and resurrection now. Go and share the wondrous news of God's love in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Read Psalm 4

- ¹ Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.
- ² How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods^[b]?^[c]
- ³ Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- ⁴ Tremble and^[d] do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.
- ⁵ Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.
- ⁶ Many, LORD, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?”
Let the light of your face shine on us.
- ⁷ Fill my heart with joy
when their grain and new wine abound.
- ⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, LORD,
make me dwell in safety.

Prayers of the People:

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: Acts 3:12-19

When Peter saw this, he said to them: “Fellow Israelites, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? ¹³ The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ¹⁴ You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. ¹⁵ You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. ¹⁶ By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus’ name and the faith that comes through him that has completely healed him, as you can all see.

¹⁷ “Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ¹⁸ But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. ¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 John 3:1-7

3 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ² Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, ^[a] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. ³ All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. ⁵ But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. ⁶ No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

⁷ Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 24:36-48

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Message

We as Christians are rejoicing and celebrating on this second Sunday after Easter the victory of Christ, our Savior over sin and death. This rejoicing and celebrating should continue every day of our lives. As we read the lesson from Acts we should realize that what we have before us is one of the early sermons of the early apostles in this case it is Peter. Those early sermons followed a basic familiar outline which states: these people sinned by putting Jesus to death, but God raised him again from the dead and their sins are forgiven. This was God’s plan and it fulfilled what the prophets of old foretold. In the Gospel Lesson we heard that Jesus reminded his followers when he appeared of this fact in verse 44 when he said: “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” This morning we are reminded the fact that God fulfilled his prophecy about Jesus. The fact is that God fulfilled all of his prophecies.

Just prior to today’s lesson from Acts, something that made everyone stop in their tracks and stand there in awe happened. A man who had been crippled from birth, who was over 40 years old and had begged at the temple gates for years, was healed and enabled to walk. As the people were about their daily routines, they suddenly saw this man jumping and running around in the temple courts. They would never forget what had just happened that day. It was a miracle.

It was like the blinders of everyday life were removed from people, and they were so amazed that they were willing to stop and listen. Their hearts and minds were so shocked that they wanted to hear, wanted to find out what happened, and how it happened. When Peter healed the lame man, he did not allow the focus to be on him for Peter said: “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers,

has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you. You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this. By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong.”

We are no different from those early Jews that Peter was talking to, because we all have had times when we have remained silent when we knew we should have spoken up. There have been times when we should have testified about our faith but it was easier to remain quiet. Peter gave a clear testimony as to who the Power Source was behind the miracle. It was Jesus. Instead of pointing people to himself, Peter pointed them to Christ. Peter used this opportunity to share Christ.

You may feel that opportunities to share your faith do not come by too often, but they do come, maybe as simple as while you are tucking a child into bed and they ask a question about God or Jesus. A friend going through a death in the family, they consider you as a religious person and they ask, “How do I get through this?” There are times in life, when people’s blinders are removed, and they honestly will look to you for some answers. It is at that time that you have an opportunity to say something worthwhile. A time you are called to share your faith, to share Christ. Peter used this opportunity to share Christ.

Peter did not want glory for himself; he wanted glory for God and his Son, Jesus. And through his miracle, God glorified his Son, his Servant, our Savior, Christ, the Lord.

The glory of Jesus, we see in his word. The glory of Jesus we see in his miracles. And as believers we are privileged and blessed by God’s grace also to see the glory of Jesus in his suffering and death. Because, then, we see him brought back to life. When we look at the Savior, we do see that he suffered. When we look at the Savior, we see that he died on the cross. When we look at the Savior, we see that he was placed in the tomb. But also when we look at the Savior, we see that he came back to life, ascended into heaven to sit at God’s right hand and God glorified his Son, our Savior.

Our God did fulfill the prophecy about his Son, Jesus, that one would suffer for the sins of the world and after suffering, would sit at his own right hand. God fulfilled prophecy about Jesus, when mankind denied him and God glorified his Son and did all that for us because, only then believers are forgiven! This brings us to one

of the most powerful statements in our Lesson that the Lord offers to those who are guilty, in verse 19 when Peter tells them, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.” Those listening would have been filled even more with the faith that comes through Jesus, realizing that, yes, they were sinners and guilty, guilty beyond all degree. Yet, God fulfilled the prophecy about Christ, their sins were forgiven.

Mankind, and we are part of mankind, denied Jesus so that he was put to death, according to God’s plan. God glorified his servant Jesus, his Son, our Savior according to his plan and prophecy. And then we find all of this for one single purpose, in order that our sins are forgiven. The people intended to harm Jesus, and they did, they put him to death, but God intended it for good for the eternal salvation of many lives. We rejoice on this Sunday and every Sunday because God fulfills his prophecy about Christ, our Savior. You and I rejoice today and every Sunday realizing that Christ came back to life to provide for us the forgiveness of sins. So when the next opportunity arises to share your faith with another, let people know about Jesus Christ and what He is doing for you. Amen.

Benediction:

Go now as God’s chosen witnesses to testify that Christ has been raised and that we are raised with him. Do not look for him among the dead, but be glad and rejoice in his salvation. And may God raise you from all that would entomb you; May Christ Jesus call you by name and go ahead of you; And may the Holy Spirit empower you for all that is good. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, In the name of Christ. Amen.