

Home Service for 4/25/2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

When we love with our lives, we become reflections of God for all to see.

Call to Worship:

We gather together to worship God, the Shepherd of our souls. The one who has created us, who sustains us, who redeems us, who walks beside us in good times and bad, and who calls us to follow. This is our God! Let's worship Him together!

Opening Prayer:

Shepherd of love, guide our thoughts and our actions, that we too might become shepherds of love. Speak to our hearts as we listen this day, that our hearts may expand and embrace all of your sheep. Love us fully, that we might love all of the flocks of your world as fully as we are loved by you. In your shepherding love, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Gentle Shepherd, You guide us in right paths, You lead us in the ways of righteousness, but we have allowed our anger, our rage, our greed, and at times even hate, to direct our paths. We have overreacted, we have taken more than our share, we have despised others that seem to have it all. Forgive us, God, for not following Your ways. Forgive us for not remembering that we are Your sheep, and You are our Shepherd. Forgive us when we have not listened for Your voice and instead have acted in the ways of the world. Guide us back to Your path, to loving You and loving our neighbors. Help us to unclench our fists and lend out our hands in hope and healing, forgiveness and love. In the name of Christ our Shepherd we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The Good Shepherd knows the sheep, and the Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep so that the sheep

may live. We are part of the flock; we are part of Christ's body. In Christ we find wholeness and restoration. Go forth and share this Good News. Amen.

Read Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Prayers of the People:

Holy God, we marvel at the mystery of Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. We are awed by his obedience, astonished by the depth of his love for us and amazed by the display of your power over the forces of sin and death. You are a God of wonders. You restore that which has been lost, bring new life from that which is old, create beauty from sin and ugliness and offer healing and hope where there appears to be only sickness and death. Your miraculous power continues to work in our lives and in our world. Set our hearts aflame and open our eyes that we may recognize your presence in every person, in every situation, in every place. 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: Acts 4:5-12

⁵The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. ⁷They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹Jesus is

"the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone."^[a]

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 John 3:16-24

¹⁶This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. ¹⁷If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

¹⁹This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. ²¹Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God ²²and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. ²³And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. ²⁴The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

Read the Gospel Lesson: John 10:11-18

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹²The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when

he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

Message

What's in a name? We hear our name spoken often, but we may not even know the meaning of our name. Still if we take the time we can remember the feelings we had when someone special said or says our name, especially when they say it with love. Be it a parent, a grandparent, a spouse or anyone special in our lives. Sometimes if you are like me, we feel our title is more important than our name. Remember how you felt when you were called Mommy or Daddy for the first time. For many of us it is now when we are called Grandma or Grandpa or Nana or Papa, because those names are said with love by those we love. In our Lesson from Acts, we are reminded of the very fact that there is a name that should be everything for us. We are reminded that in the name of Jesus we as believers find salvation. It is a name that is above every name. Paul tells us: "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name. At the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-12) So what's in a name? Maybe it depends on whose name it is for we are reminded, "Jesus' Name is above every name."

I think some background on the Lesson is needed: Peter and John were spending time in Jerusalem after the resurrection. They had healed a beggar who was crippled from birth by the power of Jesus' name. After that, many people were anxious to listen to Peter and John and the message of the resurrection. We are told that many of the people who came and heard them believed. So they went around the city preaching more and more about this Jesus of Nazareth which made the church leaders very upset, so they were put into prison, because not everyone was excited to hear about this message of salvation. There were many who rejected that name of Jesus, mainly the leaders.

We find Peter and John brought out of prison, and now they were standing before the Ruling council. Members of that ruling council were the elders and teachers of the law and also the high priests of the day. As Peter stands there before them He is filled with the Holy Spirit and just as Jesus promised God gave him the words to speak. Peter says: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified." Peter includes in that name the title "Christ," which meant the Messiah, which meant Anointed One. He also includes what they despised the most--Jesus Christ of Nazareth. For they were always under the assumption of what good could come from Nazareth? It was this Jesus, this Savior, the Anointed Messiah of Nazareth whom they crucified, who they thought they had removed from their lives forever. His name is still before them. Peter goes on to tell them: "He is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone." The cornerstone of Christianity. Instead, they rejected Him and put Him to death on the cross.

We know that we cannot buy our salvation by our works or efforts not matter how hard we try for the fact is Christ is the only source of salvation, that He has paid the price, which He has worked out for our salvation. Jesus has earned for us the eternity of heaven, which we do not deserve.

Paul puts this beautifully in the Book of Ephesians when he says: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding"(EPHESIANS 1:7,8). So we are saved by God's grace according to God's wisdom, not the wisdom of the world, not the wisdom of our human nature, which says we have to try hard to get into heaven. It is the wisdom of God that says by grace you are saved; by faith in the name of Jesus which is the name above every name.

Peter gives his summary statement to which there is no argument. Verse 12 of our text, "Salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Peter says it is by Jesus alone that this man was healed. It is by Jesus alone that you and I are saved. There is no other name. His name is above every name. There is no other way but by Jesus. There is no other cornerstone but Jesus.

For the Holy Christian Church, the invisible church will stand forever; because Jesus Christ is the cornerstone. With Jesus Christ as the cornerstone, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. That's the message that God gives to us: Jesus is the name above every name, a message from the very beginning of time to the New Testament times to the very end of time that Jesus is the only name that saves. Listen to this from John: "Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son

of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life"(JOHN 3:14,15). Everyone who believes in Jesus has eternal life.

So what is in a name? There is everything in a name. The name of Jesus, who is our cornerstone, the very foundation of our Christian church and our faith, means everything to us. Oh yes, Jesus is a name that many reject. It was rejected in the New Testament times and still rejected today. Jesus is also a name that is precious and dear to us. It is that name, the only name which saves. We learn that from His life. We learn that from His death. We learn that from His resurrection and His ascension. We will see it and rejoice on the day He returns. Jesus is the name above every name, because He has saved us from our sins today and every day. For that we Praise and glorify God. Amen.

Benediction:

Go now to love, even when love involves risk, remembering that God loves us. Go now to care, even when caring is hard, remembering that God cares for us. Go now to love in truth and in action, for by this we are known as children of God. Amen.