

Home Service for 7/11/2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

May our lives be an honor and glory to God, who is our hope and our salvation.

Call to Worship:

The earth is God's and everything in it. We belong to our God. Let us lift up our voices in praise and thanksgiving. Let us lift our voices in glory and honor to God.

Opening Prayer:

God of grace and glory, renew us with your presence this day. As we gather to bless your name and sing your praise, bless us with your glorious love and your guiding light. Strengthen us each and every hour, through the power of your Holy Spirit and the wisdom of your holy word. In hope and joy, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Gracious God, pour out your mercy on us. Where there is despair, fill us with hope. Where there is sorrow, fill us with comfort. Where there is sin, fill us with forgiveness. Where there is hatred, fill us with love. Where there is worry, fill us with assurance. Gather us in the arms of your grace and glory, that we may reflect your glory with honor and praise all the days of our lives. In your holy name, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

God, who saves, is among us now: filling our lives with grace, forgiving us and making us one, perfecting all of creation, through the mercy of God's steadfast love.

Read Psalm 24

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;

- ² for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.
- ³ Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
- ⁴ The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.^[a]
- ⁵ They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Savior.
- ⁶ Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.^{[b][c]}
- ⁷ Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
- ⁸ Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
- ⁹ Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
- ¹⁰ Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.

Prayers of the People:

Lord, we are in the middle of the summer months. We looked forward to rest and recreation, but time is moving rapidly on and we still find ourselves stressed and weary. We need to slow down. We know this, but yet find this hard to do. We load ourselves up with activities, stresses, duties and then wonder how we will survive them. As you have found us before, Lord, find us again. Wrap your arms of compassion around us. Help us to savor the times that we have with each other. Make us keenly aware of the magnificence of this world. Draw us to the times of peace and rest. As we have brought names of loved ones to you for your healing mercies, remind us that we, too, stand in need of your healing love. Give us strength, courage and joy, that we might become disciples who are worthy of your kingdom, for we offer this prayer 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: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19

David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. ² He and all his men went to Baalah^[a] in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name,^[b] the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. ³ They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart ⁴ with the ark of God on it,^[c] and Ahio was walking in front of it. ⁵ David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets,^[d] harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 1:3-17

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he^[a] predestined us for adoption to sonship^[b] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he^[c] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen,^[d] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him

with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. ¹⁷ I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit^[e] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, ^[a] "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

¹⁵ Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago."

¹⁶ But when Herod heard this, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!"

¹⁷ For Herod himself had given orders to have John arrested, and he had him bound and put in prison. He did this because of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had married. ¹⁸ For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, ²⁰ because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled^[b]; yet he liked to listen to him.

²¹ Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. ²² When the daughter of ^[c] Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." ²³ And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

²⁵ At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

²⁶ The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, ²⁸ and brought

back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. ²⁹ On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Message

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound – that saved a wretch like me!” God’s grace is amazing, truly amazing. We are all in the very same condition in this life. All of us are sinners. All of us ought to be condemned. But God’s grace is truly amazing. (ROMANS 3:22b-24) “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus”. The Holy Spirit tells us through the words He gave the Apostle Paul to write to the Christians in Ephesus. We can be certain that 1) we are chosen by the Father, 2) we are ransomed by the Son, 3) and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. Praise God that you can be certain because He has promised these things.

Paul himself faced uncertainties as he wrote this letter. He was in prison in Rome on trial for preaching about Jesus. What was Paul’s response to these gloomy uncertainties? He praised God for what he has done: (Ephesians 1:3-6) “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will – to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves”. Paul was certain that in Christ God had chosen him and his fellow believers, including each of us. God chose us for adoption.

Nothing in you or me led God to choose us. Nothing that we have done or ever will do. Nothing about who we are or what we might be. Anything truly good in us is only there because God first chose us and then worked that good in us. Even our faith wouldn’t be ours if God hadn’t first chosen us. That’s why Paul made it clear that (Ephesians 1:4) “[God] chose us in [Christ] before the creation of the world”. God’s choice comes first. God’s choice is the reason we believe and do good.

The motive for God’s choice lies in Him alone. The motive is his love “In love He predestined us”. He loved you not because there was anything lovely in you. You and I were completely unlovable. But He loved us because He wanted to. This was His will. One word summarizes all this: Grace. God’s grace is His undeserved love

that loves us sinners and freely shows us that love even though we deserve his anger and punishment. God chose us not because of anything in us but because of his grace. This grace is shown only in Jesus Christ. God's choice does not depend on us, but on His grace! His grace cannot fail. God's grace is truly amazing.

What is more, he chose us "to be holy and blameless in his sight"? God's grace is truly amazing. One drop of blood pays for all of our sins. It is the very price that God demanded of himself for the disobedience of man. Jesus' innocent sufferings and death, Jesus' holy, precious blood pays for the sins of this wicked and rebellious world. Since Jesus' blood has made the full payment for us, our sins are forgiven. Our guilt is sent away as far as the east is from the west. Our every misstep is buried in the oceans' depths. God's forgiving grace is so rich that it never runs out. There's no doubt about it because the payment has already been made and accepted when Jesus died and rose from the dead. Praise God for that Jesus has ransomed us. We are forgiven.

Once again the grace of God is not just amazing but it is truly amazing. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot buy salvation. We cannot earn salvation. Most definitely we do not deserve salvation. In spite of all this against us God and His grace is for us. Consider Paul. Paul was once known as Saul, the great persecutor of the "followers of the way". God found him. God chose him. God redeemed him. God did it all because of his grace. It is no different with anyone of us. This IS God's truly amazing grace.

God choose us. God redeemed us. There is still more. God sealed us with His Holy Spirit. God wants to make sure that we are sure about our future. As believers we are comforted and reassured in knowing that God is in control; always and forever. We know this by the faith that is planted in our hearts. We know this by the faith that grows in our lives. Faith is the gift of the Holy Spirit that dwells in us. We belong to God. God's grace is truly amazing.

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit. First and foremost of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit is faith. Through God's Word, which is the truth, God gave us His Holy Spirit. Through the Gospel, the Good News of what Jesus has done to save us, the Holy Spirit called each of us. He created faith in your heart and enlightened your mind to see God's saving truth. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We can use God's gifts as He provides them to us. It is very important to remember to grow in faith; first and foremost. We grow in faith as we hear God's word, as we study God's word, and as we read God's word. We do not have to run from one end of our nation to the other looking for God. God is here, in His word.

God's gift of faith is amazing grace on display. God's grace is discovered in his word, sealed to us by His Spirit, and seen in our lives.

God's grace is truly amazing! We have only scratched the surface of the depth of the love that our heavenly Father has for the world and us. It is amazing grace that was poured on this world and each of us. It is amazing grace that has saved us for we are sinners. GOD'S GRACE IS TRULY AMAZING! God choose us when we sought Him not. God redeemed us with blood even though we sin daily and much. God seals our future with the gift of his Holy Spirit. Our Christian faith is our confidence that heaven is our home. Amen.

Benediction:

Go forth with the blessings of God. Go dance with joy, as you celebrate God's presence. Go forth with the inheritance of Christ. Go sing and shout your praise, as you share Christ's good news. Go forth, sealed in the power of the Holy Spirit. Go express your faith and hope, as you live your glorious inheritance. Go, honor and serve God with all that you say and do. Amen.