

Home Service for 8/8/2021

Welcome and Announcements

You may find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

Whoever comes to Christ will never hunger. Whoever believes in him will never thirst. Blessed be the bread of life and the living water.

Call to Worship:

Jesus is the Living Bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. Jesus said, “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.” His words are spirit and they are life! Jesus is the Living Bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. We are what we eat. You feed us, O God. We come hungry for the food that only God supplies. Bread of Heaven, Bread of Heaven, feed us ‘til we want no more.

Opening Prayer:

Source of faithful love, you redeem us from our wrongs. We come before you today, eager to be refreshed in body and to be made whole in spirit. Feed us from the living bread that comes down from heaven, for we are drawn to your son as steel is drawn to a magnet. Build up our community of faith through the power of your Holy Spirit, that we may live as those who are worthy of our calling. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Out of the depths. We cry to you, O God, with eyes streaked with tears. For we cannot always save the ones we love, and are left alone to taste the bitter dregs of our sorrow. In the lonely watches of the night, we yearn to set aside our anger and resentment, and embrace the paths of healing and wholeness. In the dark night of the soul, we long to forsake our anguish, and embrace your mercy and compassion. Open our hearts anew to your kindness and love, your mercy and compassion, that we may know in our bones how much we are your beloved children. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Beloved, sorrow may last the night, but joy comes with the morning. Even in the midst of fear and loss, be imitators of God as beloved children, and live as cherished heirs with Christ.

Read Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive

to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,

Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,

so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,

and in his word I put my hope.

⁶ I wait for the Lord

more than watchmen wait for the morning,

more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD,

for with the LORD is unfailing love

and with him is full redemption.

⁸ He himself will redeem Israel

from all their sins.

Prayers of the People:

Do we really dare to believe in Jesus Christ? That is a question that often goes unspoken but does rest in our hearts. Lord, help us in our unbelief. Help us to be courageous enough to accept the love that you have for us and the power you have to forgive and heal our souls. We live in a time of great hostility, fear and strife. It is easy for us to succumb to the terrors and forget that you are with us at all times, seeking peace and hope. You have asked us to be instruments of peace and justice. To do this we need to change our attitudes and practices to reflect your love and compassion and not be vehicles for our greed or need for approval. Jesus, the Bread of Life, has taught us the importance of serving others, and in that service we will do honor to you. Create in us hearts that are eager to serve and witness to

your love. Open our lives this day and pour your healing mercies into them, that we may be messengers of hope to all whom we meet. In Jesus' Name, we pray. 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 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

⁵The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

⁶David's army marched out of the city to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷There Israel's troops were routed by David's men, and the casualties that day were great—twenty thousand men. ⁸The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest swallowed up more men that day than the sword.

⁹Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.

¹⁵And ten of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him.

³¹Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you."

³²The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

The Cushite replied, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.”

³³ The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”^[a]

Read the Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ “In your anger do not sin”^[a]: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need.

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. **5** ¹ Follow God’s example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Read the Gospel Lesson: John 6:35, 41-51

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

⁴¹ At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” ⁴² They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

⁴³ “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. ⁴⁴ “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’^[a] Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ No one has seen

the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Message

Have you noticed how angry people are today? It seems that all of society is angry about something and at times about everything. Do not get me wrong, sometimes anger is justified, but what is important is what we do with and about our anger. The question that Paul brings up in today’s text is, “how do you deal with anger without sinning?”

Hopefully, the older we become the more we realize that words do hurt. Hurtful words along with hurtful actions are many times more painful than actual physical injury for we heal so much slower from them. The sting of hurtful words and actions can remain with us and others for years, but what good does that actually do by hanging onto that pain. As a child I can remember being told not to say anything in anger for you cannot ever take the words back once they have been said. I have learned it to be true over and over again through my life time. As Christians should we be encouraging to others with our words and our actions, but we often are not sure how to actually do this especially when we are angry. In his letter to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul instructs believers in how to encourage others through words and actions, he actually provides instructions for six ways to encourage others.

The first way we can encourage others is by being truthful with our words and doing it with true love and respect. By doing it within a loving relationship means that we do put ourselves in a place where we can be hurt for another person’s welfare. Although we are to be truthful, we must not be blunt to the extent that we are needlessly offensive. We must allow love to be our guide and ask God’s help to discover the most loving way to express the truth.

Verse 26 provides the second instructions for encouraging others. While anger is an emotion that arises in any relationship, we must not allow our anger to become sin. Biblical anger is always involves a righteous reaction to sinfulness while it is also always seasoned by love and redemption. While sinful anger wants to hurt, to get even and to get revenge. Revenge does not have a place our Christian lives and only causes more damage, hurt and anger. We must work to ensure that anger does not damage our relationship with another person.

The third way of encouraging others is by old fashion hard work. Paul admonishes us not to steal, but to work hard in order to have something to share with those in need. Sometimes our best actions are to provide a material need for another person, for that may build someone up more than we can imagine and the only way we can take that action is to be in a position financially to do so. Therefore our hard work becomes a means for encouraging others.

Verse 29 seems to stand out over much of this lesson, for we all know that words are not neutral. The words we choose are important for the words we say are either positive, which means they build up other people, or they are negative, which means they tear down other people. One of the most difficult things for us to do especially when we are angry is to evaluate our words as to whether they are positive or negative. We need to be concerned with what we say and why we say it and at the same time being mindful of the way the other person actually hears and receives what we say. Why the concern, well maybe the most encouraging thing we can do for others is to use our words to build them up.

His fifth set of instructions for us to encourage others is by forgiving them. Paul says Christ followers are to be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, for in Christ, God forgave us. You have been forgiven, so you are to forgive others. God forgave you without demanding justice. He bore your sins in His body on the cross. He forgives you even though you do not deserve it. In this same spirit you are to forgive others. God did not demand an apology in order to forgive us. He does not wait to forgive us until we apologize, for He has already forgiven us in His heart.

You are to forgive just as Jesus did, in love and mercy he forgave you. Forgiveness is an act of obedience to God. Christ followers are to live a life of forgiveness and love. Forgiveness turns bitterness into blessing and a spirit of anger, hatred, and revenge into love. If you need an example, just look at Joseph when his brothers sold him into slavery. He surely had a reason to hate them. He forgave his brothers and turned bitterness into blessing.

Forgiveness also involves treating the one who has sinned against us as though he or she has not done anything to us. We can forgive others even if they do not ask for our forgiveness. So we need to be tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. How do you forgive? Not by your own strength, for forgiveness is only possible through the Cross of Calvary. Forgiveness is accepting what Jesus has already accomplished on the cross. Your help is only a prayer away. Christ's followers are to be a little kinder, a little sweeter, a little more loving, and a little more forgiving than anyone has a right to expect.

The last instructions are to encourage others by walking in love. Our whole attitude and demeanor should be characterized by love, which includes putting others before ourselves, wanting and working for the best for and in others, being patient and kind, and hoping and believing in others.

Take the time to view how God has dealt with His anger and our sin, let that be your guide. Instead of holding a grudge, take it to the cross. Instead of being rude to people, let God get the revenge. When someone makes you angry, take it to the cross, and then take the cross to the person who is angry, but do not sin. That is what the Holy Spirit delights in. It is how Christians respond. Amen.

Benediction:

Having been filled by the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, go forth into this world where hunger and thirst persist. Bring the healing, life-sustaining, nourishing word of God and the peace and love of Jesus Christ. Offer the transforming witness of the Holy Spirit to all you meet. Go in peace and may God's peace always be with you. AMEN.