

Home Service for September 12, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

Call to Worship:

God of hope, we come into your presence this morning with confidence that you will meet us here. Where there is sadness, bring joy; Where there is tiredness, bring refreshment; Where there is despair, bring a renewed sense of hope. Let this place be a sanctuary, a safe haven for us, a home for holy words and songs and prayers as we devote ourselves to you. We pray this in Jesus' name Amen

Opening Prayer:

God of wisdom and truth, speak to us now. Inspire us with your word. Speak clearly to our hearts, that we may walk in your ways and live in your love. In the name of Christ, our messiah, we pray. Amen

Prayer of Confession:

Wisdom of the Ages, we yearn to forsake our foolish ways and embrace godly knowledge. Cry out in the streets once more, that we may hear your voice and drink deeply of your Spirit. For we are tired of reaping the harvest of our schemes, and we are weary of eating the fruit of our ways. Bridle our lips, Gracious One, that our tongues may speak no evil and utter no falsehoods, but rather proclaim your glory. In your holy and righteous name, we pray. Amen.

Words of Assurance

*Following God's law is sweeter than honey, and far more precious than jewels.
Wisdom revives the soul and makes us whole.*

Read Psalm 19:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
²Day after day they pour forth speech;

night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice^[b] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
5 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.
7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
9 The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.
10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
12 But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.
13 Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.
Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.
14 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Prayers of the People:

God of mercy and of hope, be with us this day. We have gathered here to learn of your will for us. Sometimes it is not easy for us to realize that if we are to follow Jesus we will have to make a total commitment to his ways. We will have to actually put into practice the good news of compassionate love, and healing mercies. Our hearts are filled with situations concerning family and friends, concerning neighborhood and world. We seek your healing mercies for these situations. Help us to remember that the same healing mercy is offered to each one of us. Give us strength and courage to really follow Jesus. For it is in His 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: Proverbs 1:20-33

Out in the open wisdom calls aloud,
she raises her voice in the public square;
²¹ on top of the wall^[a] she cries out,
at the city gate she makes her speech:
²² “How long will you who are simple love your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in mockery
and fools hate knowledge?
²³ Repent at my rebuke!
Then I will pour out my thoughts to you,
I will make known to you my teachings.
²⁴ But since you refuse to listen when I call
and no one pays attention when I stretch out my hand,
²⁵ since you disregard all my advice
and do not accept my rebuke,
²⁶ I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes you;
I will mock when calamity overtakes you—
²⁷ when calamity overtakes you like a storm,

when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.
²⁸ “Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me,
²⁹ since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD.
³⁰ Since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,
³¹ they will eat the fruit of their ways
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.
³² For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;
³³ but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.

³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one’s life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell.

⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, ⁸ but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 8:27-38

Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?”

²⁸ They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.”

²⁹ “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. “You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Message

Our gospel lesson finds Jesus in the middle of his public ministry. He is in northern Galilee, and he is now heading down to Jerusalem where he knows that the cross, suffering and death await him. As he begins this most difficult part of his ministry, he has to know if he has done any good, has he been successful in the ministry that his Heavenly Father has given him? He has to know if anyone has figured out who he is, why he has come. He doesn’t ask the crowds, but he asks the men who have been with him night and day for a year and a half. He asks the ones who were supposed to know him best.

So Jesus asks his disciples what the popular opinion of the people was concerning him. The public opinion of Jesus was very, very favorable. They compared Jesus to great men, John the Baptist the great prophet of the day and Elijah the great prophet of the Old Testament. Many felt both of these men would return some day. Others thought maybe Jesus was another prophet. Then Jesus is concerned what his

disciples think, so he asks them, "But who do you say that I am." Notice the disciples don't all answer at once. They don't all jump in with the answer, but one of them, Peter thinks he knows, so brave, bold Peter says, "You are the Christ." Of course, this was the right answer.

If Peter had been taking a multiple choice quiz he would have gotten an A+, but if he had been asked to write an essay on what it meant, he would have failed miserably. And isn't this where all of us are in one way or another? We are no different from Peter. As soon as Jesus began to teach the disciples what it means that Jesus is the Christ, "Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him." Peter didn't have a clue what it meant to be the Christ or the Messiah. Like the rest of Israel, Peter thought that God's Messiah would be a great warrior like King David, but on steroids!!! He would have great power, and restore Israel, both nationally and religiously. So far, Peter had witnessed Jesus' great power in many ways. He knew Jesus was special. And so, Peter had the right term for Who Jesus was, but not the right meaning.

For Christ means Messiah, the anointed one, Son Of God, one part of the trinity, Christ, one part of the Godhead, Christ the Son of God who came to earth to show, to tell and to bring the love of God to us. Scripture is clear about teaching that the Christ is God's Son. As God's Son Jesus lived a life that was without sin. As the Son of Mary and Joseph Jesus was able to die on the cross. Humanly or reasonably thinking this can be a difficult teaching to comprehend. By grace the Holy Spirit plants the word of God in our hearts so that we know and believe this Jesus is the Son of man and the Son of God.

Jesus' singular purpose for living was dying. By his death Jesus would free all mankind from the power of death. By his death Jesus would destroy the grip of Satan. This was Jesus' purpose. For our sakes Jesus became poor so that we might become rich. Time and again Scripture testifies to this vital fact of faith. Witnesses during the time of Jesus testified to Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, and our Savior. So who is this Jesus? Even, today many would have different opinions about who Jesus is. Even the non-Christian religions look at Jesus as good. Muslims recognize Jesus as a prophet. Buddhists would agree that Jesus was a man who lived a good life. These are all worldly opinions of the man Jesus. To confess that Jesus was God's Son, well, that takes faith. It was the challenge that Jesus faced all of his life. After all, the Savior of mankind did not look any different than the people of his day. Even after doing miracles Jesus' divinity was challenged. Remember from past scriptures, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary...?"(MATTHEW 13:54b, 55a). The divinity of Jesus is still under attack in our day and age. Though often denied this Jesus is true Man and true God.

The challenge before us is great. As believers we live our lives as followers of Christ. We do not do this on our own. Rather, faith comes by hearing. The message is heard through the word of Christ. We change our worldly thinking by focusing on this Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, and our Savior. "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God"(HEBREWS 12:2). We face different crosses to bear in our lives. They all pale in comparison to the cross of Christ. There Jesus breathed his last and declared: "It is finished." Looking at Jesus we see that he did all of this for the joy set before him, our salvation.

So long ago only one of the disciples saw God in Jesus, that was Peter. For the first time, Peter grasped the momentous fact that Jesus was the Christ. He didn't have a full understanding, nevertheless, Peter was able to comprehend if only dimly, God's presences in Christ. He was able to make his own confession of faith. Yes, Jesus you are God, you are the anointed, you are God incarnate.

Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ." You and I are called by God to make that same kind of response. We are called to respond to the same personal question that was asked the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" What is our answer?

WHO IS THIS JESUS? This is really the question of the ages and for the ages. Many look at Jesus as a good man, great teacher, preacher, and maybe even a miracle worker. Many see Jesus as a man. By faith we know, believe, and confess that Jesus is true Man AND true God. This is the leap of faith that is freely worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We identify Jesus as Savior, our Savior. Jesus is the world's; who lived, died, and rose again. These are the things of God that we focus on during earthly lives. "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us"(1 CORINTHIANS 2:12). WHO IS THIS JESUS? This Jesus is true Man, true God. Our Savior who freely gives us forgiveness, eternity, and joy. Amen.

Benediction:

As the Father has loved you, go now and love. As the Son has forgiven and redeemed you, go now, extending grace to all you meet. As the Spirit has transformed you into the likeness of the Son, go now, letting the life of Christ guide you each moment of the day. Go now, in love, with grace and in the light of Jesus. Amen.