

## Home Service for October 10, 2021

### Welcome and Announcements

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

*It is not what we do that saves us. It is the mercy and grace of God, poured out in love. The first shall be last, for God's love turns our expectations upside down.*

### Call to Worship:

In God's mercy, we are rich.

In Jesus' love, we are welcomed.

In the Spirit's peace, we are satisfied.

Come; let us worship our savior and our king!

### Opening Prayer:

Almighty God, we long to rest in your gentle arms. We need your compassion as we face the challenges and disappointments of life. When our hearts are hard, and our concern is only for ourselves, turn us back to you. Remind us of your saving love and keep us close to you, Lord. Love us as only you can love, in Jesus' name. Amen.

### Prayer of Confession:

Lord, we look for you in the wrong places. We put our trust in material things. We worry about things we cannot change.

We wonder if you are even there at all. For all the times we have doubted you, Lord, forgive us. For all the ways we have neglected your word and ignored your people, forgive us. Do not be far from us, Lord. There is no one else we can turn to for help. Renew our fickle hearts and help us put our trust in you. Amen

### Words of Assurance

*There is no wrong that God cannot make right. There is no chasm that can separate us from God's love. The Lord is patient and kind, generous and good. God will not forsake you or leave you. Turn to the Lord with confidence and put your faith in God's great mercy. By the power of Jesus Christ, we are made whole. Amen.*

Read Psalm 22:1-15

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?

<sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.<sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.<sup>[c]</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.

<sup>5</sup> To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

<sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

<sup>7</sup> All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.

<sup>8</sup> “He trusts in the LORD,” they say,  
“let the LORD rescue him.

Let him deliver him,  
since he delights in him.”

<sup>9</sup> Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.

<sup>10</sup> From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother’s womb you have been my God.

<sup>11</sup> Do not be far from me, for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.

<sup>12</sup> Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.

<sup>13</sup> Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.

<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart has turned to wax;  
it has melted within me.

<sup>15</sup> My mouth<sup>[d]</sup> is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

Prayers of the People:

God of infinite patience and wisdom, we come to you with so many things that claim our time, our energy, our resources, our very lives. We are easily drawn away from serving you by the enticements of the world for wealth, ease, and comfort. Just like the young man in the scriptures, we are owned by our possessions, held

captive by our treasures. You continue to offer to us healing and hope. You seek to transform our lives from captivity to freedom in witness and service. We look at the world in which there is so very much warfare and strife, anger and hatred, and we easily become overwhelmed by the needs and the stresses. Help us to place our lives and our trust in you, knowing that with your help, many wonderful things can be accomplished which will provide hope and peace for others and ourselves. Give us courage and strength to truly be your disciples. For we ask this 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: Job 23:1-9, 16-17

“Even today my complaint is bitter;  
his hand<sup>[a]</sup> is heavy in spite of<sup>[b]</sup> my groaning.

<sup>3</sup> If only I knew where to find him;  
if only I could go to his dwelling!

<sup>4</sup> I would state my case before him  
and fill my mouth with arguments.

<sup>5</sup> I would find out what he would answer me,  
and consider what he would say to me.

<sup>6</sup> Would he vigorously oppose me?  
No, he would not press charges against me.

<sup>7</sup> There the upright can establish their innocence before him,  
and there I would be delivered forever from my judge.

<sup>8</sup> “But if I go to the east, he is not there;  
if I go to the west, I do not find him.

<sup>9</sup> When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;  
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.

<sup>16</sup> God has made my heart faint;  
the Almighty has terrified me.

<sup>17</sup> Yet I am not silenced by the darkness,  
by the thick darkness that covers my face.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 4:12-16

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,<sup>[a]</sup> Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 10:17-31

<sup>17</sup> As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

<sup>18</sup> "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. <sup>19</sup> You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'<sup>[a]</sup>"

<sup>20</sup> "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

<sup>21</sup> Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

<sup>22</sup> At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

<sup>24</sup> The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is<sup>[b]</sup> to enter the kingdom of God! <sup>25</sup> It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

<sup>26</sup> The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

<sup>27</sup> Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

<sup>28</sup> Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

<sup>29</sup>“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel <sup>30</sup> will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. <sup>31</sup> But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

## Message

Have you ever been at a playground and watched children playing on the slide? Have you ever noticed a child who was reluctant to go down the slide even though an adult and/or other children are trying to encourage the child to do so. Sometimes finally you see the look of determination on the child's face and step by step they climb the ladder, but when they reached the top of the slide and their young eyes see how far down is the end of the slide, their resolve crumbles. You see the fear and disappointment on their face and with shaky knees as they slowly made their way back down the ladder. That child stood on the brink of a momentous decision and was unable to take the last step. But other times the story takes a different turn, the parent stands at the bottom of the slide telling the child they will catch them and the child enjoys the ride down the slide and wants to do it over and over again.

The Gospel Lesson is about decision making, commitment, and separation from God. The lesson is wrapped around wealth and a man's struggle. It calls into question the things, attitudes, and practices in our lives that keep us from total commitment. It's about ending the separation and taking that last step. Like the young child on the slide, the man comes to Jesus and stands on the brink of a momentous decision.

The man had responded to the compelling nature of Jesus voice and message. He was good and faithful, but he realized something was missing. A man, a human being, someone like you and I, approaches Jesus with the age old question what must I do to inherit eternal life.? Or to put in another way: "Lord, there is something missing in my life, there is so much that I have been looking for, help me to find it?" This man sensed that something was lacking in his life. His life didn't seem complete, there was a strange emptiness, there was no feeling of self-sanctification, or a feeling of self-worth in his life. So he goes to Jesus asking him to help him find the missing piece, to find fulfillment.

Jesus finds the missing link, he sees into this man's heart and finds that yes, he hasn't done anything wrong in the way he has lived life, but neither has he done anything. He has not dared to risk. He has lived the safe life. He hasn't done anything for anyone. Jesus asks him to make a choice, to give up comfort, to give up security, to give up respectability for Christianity.

Respectability consists of not doing things, but Christianity also consists in doing things. Jesus is telling this man that yes you have lived a respectable life, a good life, but you haven't committed yourself to anything but yourself. Jesus is asking, What have you done to improve the life of someone around you? What have you committed your life to? Jesus saw this man needed to make a decision concerning his life. Jesus asked him to commit himself to something other than himself, to give of himself, to risk himself, to put his being on the line for something, or someone else besides himself. Jesus is asking him to live for Jesus through his neighbor.

Jesus asks him to do this, because Jesus loved him, had compassion on him. Jesus wanted him to find the fullness of life. Jesus comes to him with a message of freedom, a message of liberation. Jesus gives him a way out of his frustrations with life, but the man has to decide whether he will take it or not. He has to decide whether he will heed this message of freedom or ignore it and go about living as usual playing it safe, living for himself instead of others. The Great Physician diagnosed the problem and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (v. 21). But for the man the price was too high. With shaky knees, the man slowly backed down. He couldn't take the last step and "went away grieving."

The story in this text is an example of how Jesus comes to each of us with the message of his gospel that demands that we make a choice about how we are going to live our lives. Our choice doesn't necessarily involve our possession, but it may be how we will use our lives for Jesus. But the point being, I think Jesus asks each of us to make some hard choices in life concerning those things which are of value to us and to him.

Jesus wasn't condemning money or wealth, but Jesus was warning the disciples, the crowds, and us about decisions concerning money. Money and things cannot have first place in our lives. Only God should be first place in our lives. When money and wealth take first place we view everything in terms of price, not value. Money and things focus our hearts on the world, not God. They can separate us from God.

It's not just love of money that separates us from God. A thousand things can separate us from God. An attitude. A prejudice. Jealousy, political positions, indifference, a hobby, an unforgiving spirit, even a theological position; all of these can separate us from God if they take first place in our lives. We're called to focus our hearts on God. To put God first in our lives. God will not take second place.

Remember Jesus said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible” (v. 27). We can’t do it on our own. But God can do it for us. That’s grace. Salvation comes through faith in God through Christ. That’s the step the man couldn’t take, giving up all and following Jesus. This passage confronts us in the one area we don’t like being confronted—our commitment. It challenges us to probe deeply and honestly into our faith relationship with God. It calls us to stand on the brink with shaky knees. It challenges us to take that last step.

When we come to Jesus, when we fall on our knees before him with our search for fulfillment know and believe there will be no easy answers, but here will be the choice of commitment, commitment to him and his way, or commitment to keep on searching, to keep on struggling, to keep on looking.

Commitment to Jesus does mean living with him in all aspects of life, the good and the bad. As you search for the meaning of life, what will you do? Play it safe, or take a leap of faith and allow Jesus to give meaning and purpose to your life? Amen.

Benediction:

*There is no wrong that God cannot make right. There is no chasm that can separate us from God’s love. The Lord is patient and kind, generous and good. God will not forsake you or leave you. Turn to the Lord with confidence and put your faith in God’s great mercy. By the power of Jesus Christ, we are made whole. Amen.*