

Home Service for 11/7/2021

Welcome and Announcements

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

The earth and all that is in it belongs to the Holy One. Look, this is our God, for whom we have waited. Who will come to the hill of the Holy One and seek the face of God?

Call to Worship:

Come and worship the one who wants your all. We come to worship the one who offers all. Come and worship with all your heart and soul and mind and strength. We come and offer all that we have and all that we are in worship and in service. Come and be blessed and you pour yourself out in worship. We will worship wholeheartedly and with joy. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Lord, we have come to you this day bringing all that we have, our lives, our hopes and dreams, our fears and sorrows. We place these before you in faith and hope, knowing that no matter what has happened you are with us and blessing us. Open our hearts to receive your words and your spirit, that we may find healing and comfort. Open our lives to the wondrous possibilities for service and joy that you offer to us. Ease our minds and spirits that we may hear the words of encouragement and peace this day. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Lord of all, the nations are yours. The poor are your treasured ones— widows, orphans, the aliens you protect. Your justice reigns over all. Forgive us when our ways devour your beloved. We don't mean to cause harm, yet we do. Forgive us when we consume more than our fair share, all the while knowing that our excesses deny the poor the things they need to live. Forgive us for building bigger closets, and not clothing the naked. Forgive us for vacationing in leisure, when multitudes long simply for rest. Hear our prayer, Holy One. May your justice and grace reign forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

We long to mend our ways. Christ can bear these sins for all who eagerly wait for him. His sacrifice on our behalf, his grace toward us, washes us anew.

Read Psalm 22:25-31

From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;

before those who fear you^[a] I will fulfill my vows.

²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the LORD will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,

²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.

²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—
those who cannot keep themselves alive.

³⁰ Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.

³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness,
declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!

Prayers of the People:

Lord, you have placed before us your wonderful world, with its blessings and its difficulties. You have called us to be peacemakers and people who will work for you, offering our lives and our gifts in your service. But we sometimes hold back from trusting in these gifts you have given to us. We wonder if they will be enough to make a difference. And we become caught in the trap of believing that only the largest gifts have any worth. Forgive us when we slide so easily into our fears of inadequacy. Each of us has been blessed, and each is called to be a blessing. There are no small and insignificant gifts for God to bless and use. Free us from our fears of "not enough" and help us to joyfully place our hopes, dreams and lives in your care. As we have lifted up names and situations today, seeking your healing mercies and comforting power, help us to feel those same mercies and comfort

active in our lives, reminding us that your love is poured out on us so that we may serve. Strengthen and encourage us as we move forward in ministry, seeking to be good stewards of all that you have given us. 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: Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17

One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home^[a] for you, where you will be well provided for. ² Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. ³ Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

⁵ "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 9:24-28

For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. ²⁵ Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷ Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, ²⁸ so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 12:38-44

As he taught, Jesus said, “Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces,³⁹ and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets.⁴⁰ They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts.⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others.⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

Message

Today is about honoring the sacrifice of both the widow and her Savior. Our themes from scripture include accepting the values of God’s kingdom; releasing the grasp of our culture; learning to give out of our abundance; and nourishing our souls with the hope that comes from God, through crying out in honest, searching prayer. The love of God is not a measured, half-hearted gift. Neither does God ask us for only some of our love, but for a love that encompasses all that we are. The women of today’s scriptures model total devotion: the poor widow who gives all that she owns to God; and Ruth, who offers herself as a wife to Boaz so that she and Naomi may have new life. Psalm 42 voices a similar devotion to God, and a longing for God’s help in the midst of hardship. The psalmist reminds us that all human activity has no value outside of God’s economy and that we can rest in these assurances: God builds, God protects, God provides.

Let us look at this morning’s scripture from Hebrews. How many of you have heard the saying, “Company is coming, so we need to put out the welcome mat,” or something similar. The difference between a door mat and a welcome mat is; that the welcome mat says, “We are glad you are here! You are among friends!” In our journey from earth to heaven, from the temporary to the eternal, we are received into glory with a welcome mat that has been placed there by our loving Savior. There is something much better than a pot of gold at the end of life; because of the work of Christ there is a welcome mat receiving us into heaven with

an enthusiastic reception. Christ welcomes us. We are welcomed into God's presence; we are welcomed into eternal life. We are welcomed into a forever fellowship with Christ.

We say we are seating in the sanctuary this morning. The definition of sanctuary is a holy place, a shelter, a house of worship. It is a place where God and man have direct contact. Each Sunday we ask for God's presence during our worship and I believe He is here for Jesus upholds our request to our Heavenly Father, but we also know that this is a man-made sanctuary and according to Hebrews, Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary. Christ entered the one true sanctuary: heaven itself. Christ entered the place of God. It is there that Christ has direct communication with the Father.

Christ has entered heaven, into the presence of God, to appeal for us. Christ uses direct communication to plead our case before God. Christ has taken our needs, our problems, our fears, and our pains to God. He has appeared for us.

I have a question for you. If you knew at the beginning of a crisis, that you would survive the crisis, would you act differently during it? If you knew the problems in advance would be taken care of, would you look at the challenge differently? Would you hesitate less about reaching out to someone else? Our epistle tells of a true crisis, the greatest crisis and shares with us that we shall survive, that we shall thrive, that we shall know peace, God's peace. It has been noted that during a crisis, true character is revealed. That we can judge a man or woman's character by how they react in the midst of the trying time that follows the event. In fact the origin of the word crisis means "to judge." When faced with a crisis, we reveal our true character, our morals, our values, our strengths and our weaknesses. Even more we reveal who and what we value. More important for a believer in Jesus, we reveal the strength of our faith, and whether that faith has matured in Christ.

We know we face a judgement to come, yet we are assured by the sacrifice of Jesus, and by His appearing before the Father, that we are not condemned. The Day of Judgement, for those of us who are people of faith, will not be a day of fear, but a day of grace. It will be a day in which we will be reminded that Christ loves us enough to die in our place. Instead of eternal punishment, Christ says, "Welcome, you are among friends."

The road to God is made open by the work of Christ. The welcome mat is out at the end of our journey. Christ is there, offering us an enthusiastic reception. So relax and know your Father in Heaven loves you. Therefore you know peace, His

peace, which passes all understanding and guards your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You may have confidence of that you can survive the challenges of today and those of tomorrow.

Let us move on to the Gospel. When I was reading the Gospel many different sermons I have heard jumped into my mind especially those with the theme of giving, but I felt there is more being said than that. I think I found the important message I was looking for and I hope you agree.

Sometimes when we are moved to amazement and awe by the people we meet, magnificent buildings we see or events that impress us, we can lose focus on what is truly important. This is the way we should look at our Gospel this morning. Jesus has just entered Jerusalem for the last time in his normal earthly life. In a few days he will be betrayed, arrested, and crucified. So he takes his disciples to the Temple, where he teaches the crowds and seeks to give his closest followers some insights concerning what it means to live in a faithful relationship with God. He knows that everyone likes to be identified with prestige and success, so he points out the fact that the scribes and those who like to walk around in long fancy robes demanding respect and honor wherever they go, that they really do not care about the poor. Jesus began by condemning those who enjoy their power and prestige. Their trappings of success – things, to which any of his listeners might aspire, would be the means of their condemnation before God.

Jesus sat and watched the crowd putting money into the Temple treasury, noting that many rich people put in a large sums which they would not miss, but the poor widow put in all she had that she had. Saying she had committed all that she had to divine keeping. The lesson seems to be clear, Jesus is advising his disciples not to be impressed by the prominent and powerful people they see, or to marvel at the size of the offering. Jesus is advising us to be careful about those things that impress and amaze us, to put them into the perspective of living a faithful relationship with God.

It is rather natural to be impressed by magnificent structures and to honor those who hold high positions or wealth, but Jesus is calling us to put this into perspective. If we are amazed by human architecture, should we not be even more amazed by the simple brilliance of the moonlit night or the vast wonder of the universe that God has made? If we honor those who give out of wealth, should we not stand in awe of the poor, who give from their grocery money for the week? As the widow was an example of what Jesus would soon do, give his all, his very life on a Roman cross for our redemption. And through our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, God claims us as his own children, uniting us in Christ with the

promise of eternal life with Him. Should that not amaze us, even more than any structure built by human hands? Should we not stand in awe of God's tremendous gift of grace, and allow that awe to change the way we live our lives, so that we might reflect our gratitude and thankfulness to God by truly caring for Christ's church and for those in need?

It is a difficult task that Jesus lays before us this morning. It is so easy to stand in awe and amazement of what human ingenuity has been able to accomplish throughout the years. Just the technological advancements is more than enough to boggle the mind, but the things that Jesus would have us stand in awe of, are the things we often overlook in our day to day lives – those things that reflect living in relationship with God. Through the power of God's Spirit at work in our lives, as we hear his word and live in communion with his church, our hearts and minds can be opened to behold just how amazing God's grace truly is. Thanks be to God for his amazing grace.

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, you have blessed us with the gift of life and all that is needed to sustain us from day to day, but we are often unappreciative. You have revealed the depth of your love for us, through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son, Jesus the Christ, yet we often fail to share your love with others. Through our baptism, you have claimed us as children of your kingdom, and heirs of eternal life, yet we often fail to express our gratitude for your gift of grace. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, move us to deeper faith, and empower us to live our lives in thanksgiving. We ask this in Christ's name. Amen.

Benediction:

You have heard the words of healing and of peace. You have been blessed by the Spirit of God. Go now into God's world to be the spirit of hope, peace and blessing for others, knowing that God is always with you. Go in peace. AMEN.