

Home Service for September 18, 2022

Welcome and Announcements

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

You are far more talented than you give yourself credit for. Be faithful in what you have been given, and God will bless you with more. But be unfaithful in what you have been given, and God will take it away. May we, who are asked to give an accounting of our talents, be found faithful.

Call to Worship:

Our world is hurting in every way: injustice in the shadows, injustice in broad daylight, worship of wealth, worship of doctrine, homeless people under freeways, hungry children in our schools, stolen pensions, destabilized nations, politicians winned and dined, judges wooed and won, exploding grenades, cherished grudges. Is there any medicine to heal us? Is there any physician? Help us, God of our salvation! Help us!

Opening Prayer:

Elusive One, the scoffers say, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Why do you tarry when your people need you? Why do you hide your face when our need is great? Speed your compassion to our side, for our souls have become wellsprings of sorrow, and our eyes have become rivers of tears. Help us, O God of our salvation, for in you alone do we find our strength to revive our souls; in you alone do we find nourishment to meet the needs for the journey. Come speedily to us once more, that we may see your glory and know where our true helps lies, Amen

Prayer of Confession:

First of all, Everlasting God, we must confess how we have not lived as your people. We serve many masters; work, wealth, power, addictions; yet find no hope in them. We hear the cries of the poor, and shut the doors of our hearts to them. We ridicule those who expose their hopes and dreams to us. Forgive us, Compassion's Heart, and heal us of our brokenness. Make us well, so that by our healing, we might be the hope and love others need in their lives, even as Jesus Christ, our

Lord and Savior, brought these gifts to us, calling us to be faithful with the grace, peace, and joy entrusted to us. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Now that we have let go of the pain, the bitterness, the anger of our lives, let us be kind, tender-hearted, and gentle towards each other, forgiving as God has forgiven us. We are God's beloved children, and will model God's grace and love in our hearts. Thanks be to God! We are forgiven! Amen.

Read Psalm 4

Answer me when I call to you, my righteous God. Give me relief from my distress; have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

² How long will you people turn my glory into shame?

How long will you love delusions and seek false gods^[b]?^[c]

³ Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself; the LORD hears when I call to him.

⁴ Tremble and^[d] do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of the righteous and trust in the LORD.

⁶ Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?" Let the light of your face shine on us.

⁷ Fill my heart with joy when their grain and new wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Prayers of the People:

Gracious and loving Creator, Sometimes the words just are not there. God, you are so amazing that our words and thoughts of how best to praise you pale in comparison to the splendors of your name. You are the Almighty, you are the Redeemer, you are grace never ending and the embodiment of love itself. And when we come to you in prayer, sometimes words fail us in what to say. Yes, we lift up our concerns, and yet sometimes they seem so small in comparison to the tribulations encountered across your creation. How can our problems compare to disasters people face, or the fighting that surrounds people trying to escape, or the horrors that no child should ever experience? Lord God, sometimes when we come to you to pray, we are clueless as to what we should ask for. You know the thoughts

in our minds and the desires of our hearts, and there are times when they conflict. Sometimes we want what is not always the best for us, and there are times that we long to hold on to the things we should let go of. There are times when really the best thing we can do is just pray thy will be done. In these moments, dear God, we are so very thankful for the lessons of your Son Jesus Christ for teaching us the words to pray when our own are insufficient, for our tradition teaches that Jesus said to pray to Our Father ...

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: Jeremiah 8:8-9:1

“How can you say, “We are wise, for we have the law of the LORD,” when actually the lying pen of the scribes has handled it falsely?

⁹ The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what kind of wisdom do they have?

¹⁰ Therefore I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners. From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.

¹¹ They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. “Peace, peace,” they say, when there is no peace.

¹² Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when they are punished says the LORD.

¹³ “I will take away their harvest, declares the LORD. There will be no grapes on the vine. There will be no figs on the tree, and their leaves will wither. What I have given them will be taken from them.^[a]”

¹⁴ Why are we sitting here? Gather together! Let us flee to the fortified cities and perish there! For the LORD our God has doomed us to perish and given us poisoned water to drink, because we have sinned against him.

¹⁵ We hoped for peace but no good has come, for a time of healing but there is only terror.

¹⁶ The snorting of the enemy's horses is heard from Dan; at the neighing of their

stallions the whole land trembles. They have come to devour the land and everything in it, the city and all who live there.

¹⁷ “See, I will send venomous snakes among you, vipers that cannot be charmed, and they will bite you,” declares the LORD.

¹⁸ You who are my Comforter^[b] in sorrow, my heart is faint within me.

¹⁹ Listen to the cry of my people from a land far away: “Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King no longer there?” “Why have they aroused my anger with their images, with their worthless foreign idols?”

²⁰ “The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved.”

²¹ Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me.

²² Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is there no healing for the wound of my people?

9 Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would weep day and night for the slain of my people.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 1 Timothy 1:12-17

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 16:1-13

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. ² So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’

³ “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg— ⁴ I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’

⁵“So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’

⁶“‘Nine hundred gallons^[a] of olive oil,’ he replied.

“The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’

⁷“Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’

“‘A thousand bushels^[b] of wheat,’ he replied.

“He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’

⁸“The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. ⁹I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

¹⁰“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. ¹¹So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? ¹²And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own?

¹³“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Message

When you think today’s society, we realize that we live in a society that is impatient and wants to see things done now or sooner. This morning, we are again reminded that the Lord has His own time according to His own plans. Paul says in our text that God wants all men to be saved. In 2 Peter 3:9, we are told: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. So the world goes on and the Lord patiently waits for more to come to repentance.” Because as Paul tells us that it should be our great joy to know that God our Savior wants all men to be saved. He gives us direction and encouragement of how that can come about and how we can be part of God’s great saving plan.

God also thinks differently than most people for He thinks global thoughts. God thinks about everybody and it only makes sense that He does. God created everybody, He loves everybody. God knows the thoughts and the intentions of the hearts of all people. God desires fellowship with every person. God wants to dance with all creation to the joyful songs of his eternal Kingdom. God wants you in His Kingdom. He wants me in His Kingdom, He wants everyone in His Kingdom. That

makes me think of a Sunday School song called Jesus Loves the Little Children. The words are: Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world, red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white. And according to God's own Word, all are precious in his sight. What a wonderful thought.

The first verse of today's Epistle Lesson I read was: "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people" now I would like to read it from the Message translation: "The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know." Paul affirms the importance of prayer and the need for prayer on behalf of all people. Paul offers a call to be inclusive in the scope of our prayers. We need to pray for all people, because God desires that all people become a part of his eternal Kingdom. Most of us are good about praying for people we love, people we know, people with whom we work. But our prayers must go beyond our comfort zone to include all others because God is thinking global thoughts.

Our Epistle Lesson at many times has been given the heading of "Instructions on Worship." Paul had left behind Timothy at the congregation of Ephesus. Paul was giving Timothy advice and encouragement. Paul gives instructions on worship for the congregation but also for Timothy in his own private worship. In verse one he uses the words: requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving. Each of first three words mean the same thing: to pray, pray and to pray some more. In other words Paul says pray constantly. The last word means to pray with thanksgiving. The prayers of the believers as the congregation and the private prayers of the believers are to be made for everyone. He says they are to be made for everyone, including for kings and all those in authority. By doing so would show true Christian character that they would pray for those in authority. Pray that the authorities may change their hearts. This would benefit them. Pray for kings and those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

If the unbeliever's heart is changed, certainly the life of the believer would better be able to be led in quietness, holiness and godliness. God would be able to do that. He would be able to change the hearts of those who are opposed to him. God did this for the Apostle Paul and Paul now knew that all things were possible with God. This is why he encourages Timothy. He encourages these believers to pray constantly for all people. He says in the unity of Christian faith they are to pray for those in authority, to pray for all people, yes, even for the rulers and those opposed to the Gospel. Sometimes we may forget to pray for those who stand against us.

Sometimes we may forget to pray for those who are enemies of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, we realize they are there. The enemies stand all around opposed to what Christ has to teach and to say.

Our Lord says to us to pray, pray and to pray some more, not just for people we know, but even for those we don't know, especially for those who stand opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord can change their hearts! The Lord encourages us in prayer, because we realize our prayers are not offered in vain. Our Lord encourages us in prayer, because He is anxious to hear us. Our Lord encourages us in prayer, because He wants to answer our prayers. It is exactly as the Prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 65:24 reminds us: "Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear." We have a God who is anxious to hear, who wants to answer our prayers. He is the only true God. He is God our Savior who wants all men to be saved. He wants us to come to Him with constant prayer.

We are reminded that God wants all men to be saved and we are to pray. We are to pray for one another, pray for our enemies, and pray for ourselves. In that way we would be encouraged to take the next step to proclaim God's Word of truth. Paul realized how many people who had and were praying for him. He saw himself as the worst of sinners. Paul was the great persecutor of the followers of the Way, but he became a proclaimer of Jesus Christ because of the power of God. God wants all men to be saved.

We have a very simple message to share. That is Jesus Christ gave himself as a Ransom for all men. Jesus has paid the price and there is no more punishment. Jesus has paid the price and all fines are taken away. Judgment is upon Christ rather than the sinner. That is the message that you and I are able to proclaim, that Word of Truth which some would deny but which cannot be dismissed. God has saved us, saved us that we might pray for others. God has saved us that we might proclaim His Word of Truth to others. We share the message with our words and often times our actions preach a greater and louder message than our words could ever say.

God wants all men to be saved, and He encourages all Christians to pray constantly for all people. He encourages us as Christians to proclaim that Word of truth so that all men would come to a knowledge of that truth; that Christ has died for the sins of the world. We are called to pray inclusive prayers, prayers for everyone. Inclusive prayers are not always easy, but they are what God desires. So let us remember to do so. Amen.

Benediction:

Be faithful in a little,

That you may also be found faithful in much.

Be faithful in much,

*That you may be entrusted with the true riches that come
from above.*

Go to be faithful children of light,

*And come to know the grace, hope, and peace of the
one who is truly faithful.*