

Home Service for 11/6/2022

Welcome and Announcements

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

*God saves the faithful and hears the cries of the despairing. God comforts our hearts and strengthens our souls in every good work and word.*

Call to Worship:

Though the earth groans and the heavens tremble, God remains faithful. Though the seas roar and the winds rage, Christ sees us through. Though timbers splinter and walls crumble, the Spirit abides among us.

Opening Prayer:

God of new beginnings, it is a joy to sing your praises. Your glory blesses our souls with hope. Your majesty fills our lives with splendor. Your Spirit makes all things new, blessing creation with healing and wholeness. Shake the heavens and earth once more, that we may see your power and hold fast to the source of our hope. For you are greater than our fears, and mightier than our failings. Call us from death to life, Holy One, for you are God of the living, not the dead. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Faithful God, we come before you with many issues on our hearts. We get frustrated and angry at the way things are going in the world. We want your immediate intervention; and when we don't see things happening the way we think they should be, we are quick to dismiss you and any thought of your presence. Help us stop our selfishness and our quick anger. Remind us that you will work with us and through us for peace and hope. Release us from the traps of quick tests of your faithfulness and help us see the "big picture" of your awesome love that spans all of time. Forgive us for our pettiness and our stubbornness. Bring us back to you, O Lord. Help us shout your praises and live lives of joyful service. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Words of Assurance: *Even though we get frustrated and angry, God still loves us and seeks to heal us. Open your hearts to receive God's blessings and to feel God's healing power in your lives. AMEN.*

Read Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21

I will exalt you, my God the King;

I will praise your name for ever and ever.

<sup>2</sup> Every day I will praise you

and extol your name for ever and ever.

<sup>3</sup> Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;

his greatness no one can fathom.

<sup>4</sup> One generation commends your works to another;

they tell of your mighty acts.

<sup>5</sup> They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—

and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD is righteous in all his ways

and faithful in all he does.

<sup>18</sup> The LORD is near to all who call on him,

to all who call on him in truth.

<sup>19</sup> He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;

he hears their cry and saves them.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD watches over all who love him,

but all the wicked he will destroy.

<sup>21</sup> My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.

Let every creature praise his holy name

for ever and ever.

Prayers of the People:

*Lord, we are people who want instant answers to all our questions. We want to know how everything is going to work out throughout all of our lives. So we pose questions in which we do not necessarily seek answers but rather entrap you into giving us what we want. Help us understand the broader picture--the scope of your faithfulness and love for us. Remind us of all the times when you have lifted us and brought us to new opportunities for learning and growing. Let us place our trust in you totally, without reservation, for you are indeed faithful and just. As we have brought our prayers before you for our loved ones and for situations in the world in which pain and anger dominate, let us place our trust in your response and your healing love. Give us courage that our faith will be a witness to those who struggle; that our lives will bear the love you have lavished on us. For we ask these things 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: Haggai 1:15b-2:9

<sup>15</sup> on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.

In the second year of King Darius, **2** <sup>1</sup> on the twenty-first day of the seventh month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: <sup>2</sup>“Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, <sup>[a]</sup> the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, <sup>3</sup> ‘Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? <sup>4</sup> But now be strong, Zerubbabel,’ declares the LORD. ‘Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares the LORD, ‘and work. For I am with you,’ declares the LORD Almighty. <sup>5</sup> ‘This is what I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear.’

<sup>6</sup>“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘In a little while I will once more shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. <sup>7</sup> I will shake all nations, and what is desired by all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,’ says the LORD Almighty. <sup>8</sup> ‘The silver is mine and the gold is mine,’ declares the LORD Almighty. <sup>9</sup> ‘The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares the LORD Almighty.”

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17

Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, <sup>2</sup> not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. <sup>3</sup> Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness <sup>[a]</sup> is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. <sup>4</sup> He will

oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

<sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things?

<sup>13</sup> But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits<sup>[a]</sup> to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>15</sup> So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings<sup>[b]</sup> we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

<sup>16</sup> May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, <sup>17</sup> encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Luke 20:27-38

Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. <sup>28</sup> "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. <sup>29</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. <sup>30</sup> The second <sup>31</sup> and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. <sup>32</sup> Finally, the woman died too. <sup>33</sup> Now then, at the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. <sup>35</sup> But those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, <sup>36</sup> and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. <sup>37</sup> But in the account of the burning bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>38</sup> He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

Message

Let us pray: Dear Heavenly Father, you sent your Son, Jesus the Christ to reveal your Word of grace and truth, and to redeem us through his death and resurrection. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, open our hearts and minds to hear his Word for our lives, and give us the strength to embrace it as we live our lives. And increase our faith, that trusting in our baptism into Christ's death and resurrection,

we might be empowered to walk in newness of life, and have hope in the life to come. This we ask in Christ's holy name. Amen.

Hope for the future is the focus of today's readings. Facing distress at the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, Haggai proclaims that the new temple will be made even greater than the old. The psalmist proclaims that God will save the faithful. The epistle addresses fear over the delay in the Lord's return. As the first fruits of salvation we have nothing to fear. Finally, Jesus confirms the truth of resurrection, for our God is the God of the living, not the dead. In the midst of anxiety and loss, hope carries the day.

Our present world seems to be full of uncertainties; we may feel that nothing is stable enough for us to hold onto at times. When the world and the devil seem to upset our grasp on life, have no fear, for God has given us a firm life line to tightly hand on to, Himself! Paul brings to the attention of the Thessalonians and to our attention as well, two great concepts that can help us stand firm. He counsels them and us not to be overly concerned because they had and we have a foundation in our lives that cannot be destroyed. Since their battle and ours is a battle of ideas, our stability comes from remembering great ideas. We have not been thrown out into the battle with no resources.

Paul begins by reminding us that God took the initiative. God did not wait for us to choose him. He chose us. This choice is made evident through the work of the Spirit and our belief in the truth. It is the Spirit speaking through the word that we must respond to. Verse 13 reminds us that God chose us. While Ephesians 1:4 states: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." God's choices are His own and they are not up for debate. His plans, that He prepared from the beginning of time, WILL be accomplished and no one is able to prevent them.

And in verse 16 Paul reminds us that God loves, I believe Ephesians 2:4-5 states it best: "But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved." Every step God takes, every breath God takes; He does it in love. Love for His own Glory and love for those He desires to save. We can hold tightly to God, by faith, because He is a loving Father to His children and we are His children. When we respond we receive salvation from our sins and we are sanctified, that is made holy, that we might share in his glory. So there is both an earthly and heavenly benefit to receiving God's grace. It does matter what you believe. It is important to remember that the word gospel means good news. This gospel gives us stability in a turbulent world.

Paul calls the readers of the Thessalonians and us to stand firm in giving thanks for others, stand firm in holding on to the teachings of Christ, and doing the good deeds and speaking with good words. Give thanks for the sevenfold spiritual blessings and as well as for the several temporal blessing. God called us, loved us, God has chosen us before the formation of the World, made to believe the Truth, saved us in Christ, sanctified us through Holy Spirit, and called us to share the glory of Jesus Christ. So, STAND FIRM during trials, temptations and persecutions till the Lord comes to this world, with eternity in mind and God's time for everything in our lives.

Verse fifteen tells us to stand firm and hold the Truth passed through traditions, which comes from the Greek word Paradosis. The word means that which is handed down or handed over. A historical tradition, especially one relating to the teachings of Jesus and his disciples. Paul refers to this term 'traditions' to God's truth which Paul had given them in person and through epistles, the real truths passed on to us from Christ through Apostles, Church Fathers and reformers and Bible scholars throughout the generations.

Finally, in 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, Paul urges the readers to pray for others and bless them through this lengthy benediction. Pray that they would do good works and they would utter good words to strengthen their lives in Christ. Paul does offer prayers for the Thessalonians and for us, to be encouraged in our hearts, and to be strengthened in every good deed and word.

This sort of prayer functions as benediction, encouragement, and inspiration. The holistic picture of "every good deed and the word" sums up the entirety of life lived: thoughts, emotions, and actions, all brought forth by the strengthening of the Spirit through the encouragement of the love of God.

We notice two persons of the Trinity had mentioned here, our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and the Father. It brings out the truth of the intimate relationship He has with us in such a strong union, that nothing can ever separate us from Him. The perfect personal security has been found here for all of us.

All of this is evidence of the grace of God is the great love the Father has given us. This loving grace gives us encouragement in our present circumstances and an enduring hope for the future. We have a confidence that both empowers us and strengthens us to excel in word and deed. Grace is such a glorious concept that some people reject it because they feel undeserving. What a liberating moment it is when a person recognizes that grace is for the undeserving. That's why they call it

grace. Just because we don't deserve it does not mean we can't enjoy it. This grace gives us stability in a turbulent world.

So I end with: Stand Firm in Praising and Thanking God for others and blessings. Stand Firm in holding traditions, teachings of Christ and apostles and Church fathers. Stand Firm in doing good works and the Word of God. Amen.

Benediction:

*Go forth with courage, for God is with us.*

*For God goes with us to guide us.*

*Go forth with faith, for Christ is with us.*

*For Christ goes with us to heal us.*

*Go forth with hope, for the Spirit makes us whole.*

*For the Spirit goes with us to strengthen us.*

*Go forth with the knowledge we are never alone for God is always present. Amen.*