

OCTOBER 24th WORSHIP SERVICE

WORDS OF WELCOME

INTROIT: Hymn #449 v.v. 1 - 2 “*Softly and Tenderly*” (Public Domain)

1. Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling— Calling for you and for me;
See at the Portals Christ waiting and watching ---
watching for you and for me!

***Chorus: Come home! come home! All who are weary, come home!
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!***

2. Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading, ---
pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not His mercies---
mercies for you and for me?

CALL TO WORSHIP: 

L: Sing aloud with gladness:

C: God is gathering the people!

L: From the farthest parts of the earth we come:

C: All who struggle; all who labor with new life!

L: Those who are weeping, God will console;

C: Those who get lost find a clear path home.

L: Let us worship the God who gathers us!

PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

L: Ever-calling God, we give thanks that you have gathered us into your church and graced us with your faithful presence. We ponder our history, ancient and still developing, and marvel at the many expressions of your church.

All: Grant us the vision to be a part of this new moment in your Church that will bring ever more joy and justice to the world. Continue to gather us, the diverse lot of us, into Jesus' vision and dream that your faithful people may be one in you. Amen

HYMN OF VISION: Hymn #581 v.v. 1-2 “*Lead Us from Death to Life*”

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PRAYER OF CONFESSION: 

L: When we want to be a church open to your transforming love,
yet cling to comfortable ways:

All: Jesus, Heir of David, have mercy on us!

L: When we want to honor your “still speaking voice”,
but are fearful of insights which challenge old assumptions:

All: Jesus, Heir of David, have mercy on us!

L: When we want to live into Jesus' dream of oneness,
but fail to listen to voices of difference:

All: Jesus, Heir of David, have mercy on us!

ASSURANCE OF PARDON: ☪*

L: Beloved in Christ, know that you are God's own. Take heart, get up; Jesus is calling to us! We trust in the one who has guided the church for two millennia. Through Christ, God forgives us our failings, and continues to call us into a community of mutual love and forgiveness. Let us celebrate this mercy of God by greeting each other with Christ's peace through song.

HYMN OF PEACE: *"Peace Be with You" Words and Music by Christopher Grundy*

SCRIPTURE:

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Jeremiah 31:7-9 (NRSV)

⁷ For thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel."

⁸ See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.

⁹ With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Psalm 126 (NRSV) - A Harvest of Joy A Song of Ascents.

L: When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream.

C: *Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy;*

L: then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

C: *The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.*

L: Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy.

C: *The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.*

L: Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

C: *The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.*

Mark 10:46-52 (NRSV) The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ⁵² Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

REFLECTION: *God of Consolation, Guidance, Healing and Restoration*

Especially Vision

How many of you are having a great day today? How many of you are having a day where you found it hard to pry yourself out of bed? Who here is facing some difficult times where the burdens are getting a little too much to bear and you just need some relief from the strain and toil? How many of you just want to sing the praises of God for something wonderful that happened this past week? I know the crew that went out to lunch last week after church had quite the surprise. When it came time to pay the bill all of you had found that each of your bills had been paid in full, including the tip, by some anonymous and very generous person. By the reactions on Flora's Facebook page not only you, but others who heard your story found a sense of hope in that generosity and a reminder that there is still good in this world. I can imagine that there are thanks not only for that person, but to God for God's generosity and provisions given through that individual. My point is, no matter what type of day you are having, you still need God. When things are tough, we need God for strength and guidance and hope and consolation among other things. When things are going right we still need God for guidance and vision and encouragement to keep us inspired and headed in a direction that builds up that which is life giving and breaks down that which is harmful.

All 3 of today's scriptures have a message for you no matter what your circumstances are today. In Jeremiah we hear how God will console those who are weeping and when he brings back the remnant of Israel even those who are considered to be of low status are included in the return and restoration of Israel for it says, "*See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back,*". I don't know about you, but I find both comfort and hope believing if God can do this for them, can't God do this for me or others who suffer as well? Psalm 126 has much the same message as well, "*May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.*" It also talks about the nations noticing the great things God has done for Israel. It didn't just affect those who were blessed by what God had done, just like those who heard of the generosity given to our Summit family and found hope and joy in that, so did the nations who witnessed what great things God had done for Israel. You don't have to be the actual recipient of a blessing to be blessed by it and experience a sense of joy and hope.

Now our Gospel of Mark is much more than just God having the ability to restore sight. Mark back in chapter 8 already shared a story of how Jesus healed a blind man of his sight and when asked who sinned to cause this condition, Jesus responded with no one, thus revealing that not every challenging condition is a punishment or natural consequence of sin. Once again as Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus, those who are traveling with Jesus try to stifle him, not fully seeing who Jesus is nor the scope of Jesus' ministry. We are not sure why they are shushing him, maybe they are seeking to preserve Jesus' honor. Maybe they felt it was important to control access to Jesus like the disciples did when they stopped someone casting out demons in Jesus' name? (9:38-39) Or are they embarrassed about Bartimaeus' low status as a blind beggar and don't see him as worthy of the Master's time?

Whatever was their reasoning, Bartimaeus was having nothing of it. By calling out to Jesus saying, "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" he is showing he understands who Jesus is - For Bartimaeus, the title indicates that Jesus is God's designated agent, and it introduces the notion of Jesus as a royal figure. He is also acknowledging that Jesus is able to offer mercy and heal even him. Bartimaeus understands he is just as worthy of Jesus' mercy and healing as anyone else and he will not be hindered by Jesus' followers. When Jesus hears Bartimaeus, he doesn't go to him, rather he has those who were trying to stifle Bartimaeus bring him to Jesus, thus having them assist in his healing. Not only does God restore physical vision to Bartimaeus and restore him to community as Bartimaeus joins in with those who are following Jesus, but I believe Jesus gave figurative vision to those who would try and limit the scope of God's healing, compassion, mercy and restoration. Hope for both the hurting and the "in crowd". Instead of condemning those who were trying to stifle God's work, Jesus invited them to share in the work, thus broadening the scope of their vision and participation in sharing the Gospel in the world.

Like I said at the very beginning, no matter what type of day you are having we all need the Lord each and every day and I hope you found some words of hope, inspiration, compassion, guidance, healing and restoration today and maybe even a clearer vision of yourself and who God is, not only today, but that you will hear them each and every day as you turn to God for guidance, mercy, healing, consolation, restoration, inspiration, vision, in praise and thanks giving for all God has done and will do in God's timing as I lift up this prayer to God.

(Sing "Open Our Eyes, Lord")

A TIME OF PRAYER –
LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS –
THE LORD'S PRAYER

CALL FOR OFFERING: 

L: Our ancestors in faith and church-building show us the way to share the gifts God has given us with the whole community.

Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God with heartfelt gratitude, commitment and praise.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: *

L: Transform our lives, O God of all creation,

All: and let these gifts change the world into which we send them.

Take them and multiply them to be a blessing of justice and peace in the world you love!

SUMM-IT UP:

Today – Dedicating our NIN donations today

Monday – 9:00 a.m. – Noon Pastor's Scheduled Office Hours

1:30 p.m. Beatitudes Study in-person Session 8 – 10

Starting Next week the in-person group

will be studying the lectionary readings for the upcoming Sunday

6:30 p.m. Church Council via Sunday Zoom Link

Tuesday – 12:30 p.m. Beatitudes Study Via Sunday Zoom Link Session 6-7

7:00 p.m. DACU Delegate Meeting

WHAT: UPDATES from the staff of our three DACU projects: The Rescue Mission, People In Need, and the Dubuque Food Pantry.

WHEN: Tuesday, October 26 at 7:00pm

WHERE: First Presbyterian Church, 1684 Iowa Street, Dubuque

DONATE: Donations to the Dubuque Food Pantry are always welcome

VIRTUAL: Stream at www.dacuonline.org or <https://youtu.be/JjgDfo42JqU>

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Wednesdays 6:30 p.m. – Zoom Fellowship Hour via Sunday Zoom Link

Friday – Sparks articles Due!

Next Sunday 10:00 a.m. – All Saints Sunday

SENDING HYMN: #584 v.v. 2-4 “I Am the Light of the World”

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CHARGE & BENEDICTION:

May God bless and keep you, may God’s face shine upon you
and be gracious to you.

May God look upon you kindly and grant you God’s peace. Amen.

POSTLUDE:

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