

WORSHIP SERVICE SUNDAY OCTOBER 10th

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*Prayers for this service have been taken from **Enter Every Trembling Heart** written by John Killenger Copyright © 2003 by Abingdon Press

WORDS OF WELCOME

INTROIT: #70 v. 1 *“God Is Here! As We Your People”*

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CALL TO WORSHIP:*

L: On the golden days of sunshine or the silvery days of clouds and rain

C: God is always our bright and shining hope.

L: God is the one who fills our hearts with love and joy.

C: God helps us to become renewed and recentered for the best living of our days.

L: Therefore, let us worship God.

HYMN: #28 *“For the Beauty of the Earth”*

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1. For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies.

Refrain: God, of all to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

2. For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale and tree and flower, sun and moon and stars of light,

Refrain: God, of all to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

3. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,

Refrain: God, of all to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

4. For the good that love inspires, for a world where none exclude,
For a faith that never tires: and for every heart renewed

Refrain: God, of all to you we raise this, our hymn of grateful praise.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION*

L: Lord God of hosts, who spoke to us in ancient times through the law and the prophets and who visited us in Jesus Christ, come now and make your presence known in our midst. Remind us of our salvation, grant us mercy for all our sin, and renew your spirit within us that we may rightly praise you and afterward, serve you.

Moment of Silent Confession

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

L: God sent Jesus into the world not to condemn the world but that the world might be saved through Christ. Know that in Christ there is mercy and forgiveness and through the power of the Holy Spirit you are raised up into new life.

C: Thanks be to God; we will embrace God’s grace and mercy and live life renewed by the Spirit.

HYMN OF RESPONSE: “Give Thanks”

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SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 90:12–17, (NRSV) -

¹² So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.

¹³ Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants!

¹⁴ Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

¹⁵ Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil.

¹⁶ Let your work be manifest to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

¹⁷ Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,

and prosper for us the work of our hands— O prosper the work of our hands!

Hebrews 4:12–16 (NRSV)

¹² Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

¹⁴ Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Mark 10:17–31 (NRSV) - The Rich Man

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” ²⁰ He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him 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.” ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ 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.” ²⁶ They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” ²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

²⁸ Peter began to say to him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.” ²⁹ Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”

A TIME OF REFLECTION: Truth Spoken in Love

I have titled today's reflection "*Truth Spoken in Love.*" On more than one occasion I have heard the Bible referred to as God's love letter to humanity. What do you think of that? I truly believe contained in the Bible are God's truths spoken in love. Love is sometimes comforting and assuring, while other times love is a tough love that challenges and seeks to tear down that which is harmful and self-centered. Ernesto Tinajero said "*If you read the Bible and it does not challenge you, then you are reading yourself and not the Bible.*" Have you ever found yourself searching the bible for verses that affirm what you believe while ignoring the ones that challenge those very same beliefs? Scriptures if read and understood out of context can be misleading rather than a revealing of truths.

If today's scriptures don't challenge you, I don't know what will. In Psalm 90:12 we hear, "*So teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart.*" Hebrews 4:12-13 says this, "*Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.*" When we read the Bible and look to Jesus seeking truth often times we are challenged. In those challenges there are times when the word of God cuts us to the core. It begins to help us see with clarity the intentions of our own hearts. As we are open to this examination, though the truth may hurt, it can also be freeing when we allow ourselves to gain wisdom from these revelations and allow that wisdom to aide in transforming our lives, not on our own, but with the help of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In our Gospel lesson today it is a story that is in all three synoptic Gospels. There is a rich man who approaches Jesus seeking what he needs to do to gain eternal life. When Jesus tells him "*You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'*" If you notice Jesus doesn't rebuke the rich man nor does he claim the rich man lied when he responds with these words, "*Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.*" No, instead Jesus looks upon the man through the eyes of love and compassion. So why, if the man has followed all the commandments, is he coming to Jesus with this question? I think he knows that there is more to life than following a set of rules and amassing wealth. He senses something missing in his life.

If you notice, the man's focus is on only himself. His following the rules was about what it got him. His wealth was about how it would benefit him. Even his seeking salvation, there is no concern about others inheriting eternal life, only concern for himself. Earlier in my ministry I was speaking with someone about confirmation class I said to the person I would incorporate a community service aspect into my next class. I felt this was an important aspect of the class not as a checklist, but that they might see being a disciple of Christ involves caring about the well-being of others and the environment. I wanted to offer them experiences that would help them grow in their faith and in their ability to both see and listen to God as they served. I would offer opportunities to serve as a group to help them become comfortable in reaching out and serving, but I would also encourage individual projects so that they might listen to how God was using their gifts and their lives for the common good. The individual I was speaking with thought that was a waste of time. He, like the rich man in our story today, felt that salvation was solely about your relationship with God and that being a

Christian had nothing to do with caring for or being in relationship with others or the environment.

Jesus response to the rich man was intended to free the man from that which held him captive, not as a punishment. Resner observes that Jesus "draws a line in the sand" for this man, because this is a matter of ultimate concern for him, and for everyone who is too comfortable, in any age. However, it's not about getting to heaven but living the abundant life now: "Take care of where your heart, where your life, is now." Jesus' challenge to rid himself of his wealth was not an arbitrary distribution with no purpose, but to give it to the poor in order that they might have their daily bread and do some good. But I think Jesus instruction was deeper than just sharing his wealth and the hold that it had on him. I believe that had the man embraced what Jesus had to say his eyes and heart just might have been open to the relational aspect of being a disciple of Christ. His eyes would have been opened to reaching out in love. No longer would he be following the commandments as a checklist to earn eternal life; he would begin to recognize them as sign posts in his life as to whether or not he has embraced the love of God in his life. Unfortunately, the truth Jesus spoke in love was too big of a challenge for the man to face, at least for that day. Who knows, maybe down the road he was able to embrace the challenge Jesus laid before him.

This scripture is so easy for us to look at others who are more affluent than ourselves and sit in judgment of them while failing to see the log in our own eye and failing to hear the challenge for us. Though this scripture points out the captive hold that wealth and things have on us and how we perceive success I think the challenging truth spoken in love goes beyond just wealth. I encourage each of us to read this scripture again and put ourselves in the place of the rich man and listen to what Jesus would respond to us. What challenge as you sit and meditate on this scripture do you hear Jesus giving to you in love, not condemnation? What is it that has a hold on your life and keeps you from fully embracing your life as a disciple and apostle of Christ? Will you allow God to help you face that challenge through the power of the Holy Spirit, or will you like the rich man turn and walk away because at least for today, the challenge is too much to face?

In John 10:10 Jesus tells us the he came that we may have life and have it abundantly. Everlasting life begins now. God desires that we have life and not mere existence. When we accept the challenges God gives to us and allow God to work within us we begin to experience life more fully, see abundance where we once saw scarcity, and see possibility where we once saw improbability if not impossibility. What must we do to inherit eternal life? Though the specifics may be different for each of us because we have different holds on our lives, in general we need only be open to God's guidance as we pray "*Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. ⁵ Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation.*" (Psalm 25:4-5)

A TIME OF PRAYER

**– LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS –
THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

CALL FOR OFFERING HYMN: "Freely, Freely"

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PRAYER OF DEDICATION: #845* (NCH)

L: God most merciful and gracious, of whose bounty we have all received:

All: accept, we pray, this offering of your people. Remember in your love those who have brought it and those for whom it is given; and so follow it with your blessing and guide its use with your wisdom so that it may promote peace and goodwill among all people and advance the realm of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

SUMM-IT UP:

Monday – 9 – Noon Pastor’s Scheduled Office Hours;

1:30 p.m. Bible Book Study – Sessions 6 & 7

3:00 p.m. Trustees

Tuesday –12:30 p.m. On-line Bible Study via Zoom

Wednesdays – 6:30 p.m. – Zoom Fellowship Hour

SUNDAY OCTOBER 17th, ALL CHURCH MEETING

Immediately following worship in-person and via Sunday Zoom link.

****October 31st will be our All-Saints Day Worship Service. Please notify Pastor if you have lost someone near and dear to you since November 1, 2020.**

SENDING HYMN: #419 “Now Thank We All Our God” (Public Domain)

- 1. Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in whom this world rejoices,
Who from our parents' arms, has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.**

- 2. O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us still in grace, and guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills, in this world and the next.**

- 3. All praise and thanks to God our Maker now be given;
To Christ and Spirit too our help in highest heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.**

CHARGE & BENEDICTION: #875* (NCH)

L: Jesus said, “You ought always pray and not faint.”

May we not pray for easy lives, but pray to be stronger.

May we not pray for tasks equal to our powers,

But for powers equal to our tasks.

In doing so our work will be no miracle --- we will be the miracle.

As we do this may God bless us and keep us, May God’s face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

May God look upon us kindly and grant us the peace that God alone can give.

POSTLUDE: