

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service - 10:30 AM

April 26, 2020

Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

Call to Worship

Followers of Jesus, by his cross we are redeemed from the futility of sin.

Alleluia!

By his rising we are free from the fear of death.

Alleluia!

By his love we are made new in the living and enduring Word of God.

Alleluia! Thanks be to God!

Hymn 464 "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

1 Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before
Thee,
Opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the gloom of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day.

2 All Thy works with joy surround
Thee,
Earth and heaven reflect Thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around Thee,

Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain,
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

3 Mortals, join the happy chorus
Which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o'er us,
Joining all in heaven's plan.
Ever singing, march we onward,
Victors in the midst of strife,
Joyful music leads us sunward
In the triumph song of life.

Call to Confession

God judges all people impartially according to their deeds. Trusting in God's love in Jesus Christ, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Almighty God, our world is filled with corruption; power disguises itself as truth; convenience masquerades as goodness; selfish pleasure imitates love. We confess to you, O God, that we have been caught in the web of the world's sin. By the power of the Holy Spirit, save us from these deceptions and free us for glad obedience, that we may see the joy of Jesus' resurrection and receive the promise of everlasting life. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Followers of Jesus: God has promised salvation to us, to our children, and to all who are near and far.

Prayer for Illumination

Lord, you opened the meaning of the Scriptures to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and set their hearts ablaze. By the power of your Spirit kindle our hearts as we hear your word proclaimed, that we may receive you with joy. Amen.

First Reading Acts 2:14a, 36-41

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Second Reading 1 Peter 1:17-23

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

Children's Sermon

Today, Cynthia has a special sermon for the children. Gather the children around your TV, computer monitor, iPad or phone

SERMON "Living Out a Life of Grace"

1 Peter 1:17-23

- In light of the COVID-19 self-quarantine, I cannot believe all the high school seniors who are missing out on their traditional graduations and senior festivities.
- Our hearts and prayers goes out to them.
- ILL: When I was a senior in high school in Southern California, one of the senior events was a tradition at Disneyland called Grad Night.
 - It was an after-hours party that lasted into the next morning. Seniors from all around Southern California looked forward to Grad Night every year.

- However, one of the requirements to go was that everyone had to attend in semiformal attire.
- Men wore ties, and women wore dresses.
- Can you imagine, Disneyland after hours, filled with 18-year-olds running around the theme park in black shoes, and high wedge shoes??
- The rationale for the semi-formal attire was that—the way you dressed demonstrated the way you will behave
- Science says that the clothes we wear affect our behavior, attitudes, personality, mood, confidence, and even the way we interact with others.
- This is called “Encllothed Cognition.”
- It is the psychological experience of wearing certain clothes that constantly remind you of what those clothes represent.
- Basically, these researchers are saying how you dress effects the way you behave.
- In our text this morning, the writer Peter is encouraging his Christian readers who are scattered throughout Asia Minor facing active persecution.
- In the first part of the letter, Peter establishes hope by emphasizing what we have in Christ is far greater than their current circumstances.
- In the verses prior to our text, he writes:

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. (1 Peter 1:13)
- See the words minds and discipline?
- The mental discipline Peter wants his readers to obtain is the fact that now that they have faith in Jesus Christ, they are to behave like Christians to live lives that are consistent with the character of God Himself.
- He is focusing on their behavior
- In the same way formal clothing had an effect on the behavior of seniors at Grad Night, Peter is essentially telling them, because of the holiness of God within them that they are to live their lives as holy people.
- In our text this morning, Peter is continuing the same theme.
- Beverly Zink-Sawyer writes in Connections says, “Peter offers the church a vision of what it looks like to be the people of God and challenges the communities to which he wrote and the community of the church today to live into that vision.” [Connections: Year A, Volume 2 (Kindle Locations 7677-7678). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.]
- Because we are people saved by God’s grace, I feel that in our text this morning offers us insight how we are to Live Out a Life of Grace:

Live Out a Life of Grace,

1. Walk in Reverential Fear

17 If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile.

- Interesting here, Peter brings up the whole idea of the impartial judgement of God in the midst of his words of comfort to these exiled Christians.
- Why would he do that? Why bring up the judgement of God? How is that encouraging?
- Because he wants them to know that their actions as exiles are seen by God, and that God is watching them.

- Think about it.
- Wouldn't your behavior change if you were reminded that the God who judges was watching you? YES!!!
- Peter wants to bring about an awareness of this aspect of God to lead us into the next phrase: to live in "reverent fear."
- What does it mean to fear God in light of 1 John 4:18 *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear?*
- The fear mentioned by Peter is the **fear of living as though our faith were not in God**
- For example:
 - When we are tempted to conduct ourselves in a way that would show our hope in things rather than God, we should fear.
 - When we are tempted to act in a way that would show our hope in the pleasure, alcohol, or other substances instead of God, we should fear.
 - This is the fear of living in ways that betray our lack of satisfaction in God
- Another way of saying "reverential fear" is that Peter is calling the believer should live in the presence and dependence of God.
- The relationship between God and his child is not one of dread but of respect.
- There is a difference:
 - to live out of dread for God - because God is the judge or
 - to live out of respect for God - because of the inheritance we have as people of faith
 - One is external rules based and the other is an internal motivation of the heart
- Moving on in the text, there is an emphasis to the readers of Peter that they are exiles in a foreign land.
- In the same way for us, we are to live our lives as a strangers on earth but know that we have our citizenship in heaven
- God's eye is always watching over us as well as the eyes of the world.
- The accountability here is for us is to live...like Christ were living through us.
- Throughout the New Testament, there are references to our testimony to the world as:
 - Philippians 1:27 *Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel fo Christ*
 - Matthew 5:14 *You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid*
 - 2 Corinthians 3:2 *You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:20 *So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us*
- Everyone of these verses emphasizes the responsibility we have to he world through our words and actions.
- In our text, Peter is doing the same thing by bringing to attention to the responsibility they have to LIVE like people of grace.
- For us, since we have been saved by grace, it is demonstrated by a Christlikeness that the world sees through us
- C.S. Lewis "Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching"

- John Wooden “The true test of a man’s character is what he does when no one is watching”
- To walk in reverential fear is to raise the level of integrity or character in our hearts and lives so that we do not look like the rest of the world.
- This is what Peter is calling his readers to practice, and this is what God is calling the church to demonstrate as well.
- Walk in reverential fear.

2. Appreciate Our Redemption

18 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20 He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Jesus has given us resurrection. 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

- Throughout this section of Scripture and in verses 18 and 19, there is a logic to this text where Peter is exhorting his readers to “Live [a certain way], because you know- [certain things!]”
- Peter is saying, how we live is informed by what we know.
- In a nutshell, the fullness of the Christian life is lived out of the knowledge of redemption that Christ has accomplished for us
- In v. 18, Peter begins by emphasizing the incomparable value of the ransom paid for God’s people through Jesus Christ.
- Now, in the New Testament, the Greek word for “redeem” goes back to the institution of slavery in ancient Rome.
- Unlike our perceptions and feelings slavery in the US, people became slaves in various ways through war, bankruptcy, sale by themselves, sale by parents, or by birth.
- Slavery in ancient Rome was not by wealthy profiteering of money hungry humans, but a common occurrence where up to 50% of the population were probably slaves at one time
- What is interesting, slaves could look forward to freedom after a certain period of service and a price.
- Often, the price would be provided by someone else, who purchased a person’s freedom from servitude.
- A freed man was a person who formerly had been a slave but was now set free.
- Peter is telling his readers that they have been ransomed from their past by something more precious than gold or silver...that is by the blood of Jesus Christ.
- Do you see the BIG DEAL of what it means to be ransomed for our sins?
- That means, Jesus died for you and me and paid the price for our release of slavery to sin and death so that we can have hope, and we can have life.
- ILL: A young man was speeding home over the weekend was clocked by law enforcement going 105 mph. The car was impounded, and the young man was bought straight to the courthouse to face the judge.
 - Well the good news is that the county where he got caught happens to be the county in which his dad is the judge. So he’s thinking that his dad loves him, he will let him off, and everything will be fine.

- But just as he are entering the courthouse, he remembered that his dad is a really good judge. He never punishes the innocent. He always punishes the guilty. He is a good and just judge.
- Now the young man is a little nervous. He asks himself which is going to win out, his dad's love or his justice? Will it be the judge who is his dad and loves him and wants to do good to him. But on the other hand, will he see the good and just judge who will follow the law and render a just verdict.
- So the young man, stands before his dad, and the judges says to him, "Son, this officer says you were going 50 mph over the speed limit. How do you plead?"
- The young man sheepishly pleads guilty.
- The judge looks at him and says, "That will be \$500 or a week in jail. Guilty as charged." And he bangs down the gavel.
- Well the young man does not have any money, so the bailiff comes towards him to take him away to start serving his time in jail, when the dad, the judge stands up and says, "Wait a minute, bring him back here." Then he stands up, takes off his robe and walks down from behind the bench. Then he reaches into his coat pocket, takes out his checkbook and writes the court a check for \$500, the exact amount for the fine. Then he offers it to his son.
- In the same way, we are all guilty before a holy God and deserve the strictest punishment for our sin and rebellion against God. Because of God's just nature, God demands that the penalty be paid. The good news is that God loves you and provides a solution for us through the payment of his Son Jesus Christ on the cross
- The price that God paid for us through his Son was for our redemption!
- We tend to not think about our redemption too often, but it needs to be appreciated and remembered regularly.
- Do we take communion and marvel at the fact what the price of Jesus' life that God paid for us?
- *v. 21 Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.*
- What does it take to set our hopes on God?
- Appreciate our redemption.

3. Demonstrate Heartfelt Love

22 Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23 You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

- A characteristic of a person who has faith in Christ, is a purified soul.
- It means that at some point in our spiritual journey when we we embrace faith in Jesus Christ, our souls are purified by the work of Christ on the cross.
- However as we live our lives, we strive to live out our purified souls through our daily behavior by what Peter calls, "obedience to the truth" in verse 22.
- This is reading, knowing, memorizing, and demonstrating the Word of God in our lives.
- An outcome of our Christian faith is our love for others.
- *John 13:35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*

- Peter is saying that people of faith have a common characteristic that is not commonly found in the world.
- This is a genuine mutual love for one another.
- Rather than cold bitter isolation because of unfortunate circumstances, God is calling for a new level of love for others
- In other words, Peter is calling those who are in isolation and persecution to **deeply** love others from the heart.
- The word "deeply" is drawn from athletics which means to exert oneself with all of one's energy
- Wow, that is a tall order!
- We are to demonstrate this crazy, persevering love!
- Peter continues by saying, we do this because we have been born anew.
- We have been born anew through the agency of the Word of God or the instrument of communication found in the words and actions of Jesus Christ that will not fade away.

Affirmation of Faith (Apostle's Creed)

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering

Bountiful are God's gifts to us. In gratitude, let us offer our hearts and the fruit of our labor to God's service.

Prayer of Dedication

Almighty God, by your grace, accept the fruit of our labor and the offering of our lives. Let us be a sacrifice of thanksgiving in union with our risen Lord, who lives and reigns with you forever. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Let us unite our hearts in prayer, saying, God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the church throughout the world, that as we celebrate the great fifty days of Easter we may renew our faith and strengthen our witness in Jesus' name. God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For pastors, teachers, and ministers, that they recognize the risen Christ in Word and Sacrament and lead your church with wisdom, humility, and courage; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the governments of the world and its leaders, especially President Trump, Governor Beshear, our local city and county leaders, that they may resist the corruption of sin and serve the common good; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For our planet Earth, that all people may be good stewards of its resources and share in its abundance; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the poor and the stranger, that they may receive a place of refuge and hope, and that the church may offer the hospitality that the first disciple offered to Jesus on the road to Emmaus; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For the sick and those in distress, that they may find healing for their pain and be restored to fullness of life; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

For our neighbors, that we may live together in peace and share in our resources; God of resurrection, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, receive these prayers we offer, and by the power of your Holy Spirit make us witnesses to the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

Hymn 540 "God Be with You Till We Meet Again"

1 God be with you till we meet
again;
Loving counsels guide, uphold you,
With a Shepherd's care enfold you:
God be with you till we meet again.

2 God be with you till we meet
again;
Unseen wings protecting hide you,
Daily manna still provide you:
God be with you till we meet again.

3 God be with you till we meet
again;
When life's perils thick confound you;
Put unfailing arms around you:
God be with you till we meet again.

4 God be with you till we meet
again;
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,
Strike death's threatening wave
before you:
God be with you till we meet again.

Benediction

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

Organ Postlude