

**Presbyterian Church of Henderson**  
Worship Service 10:30AM, Facebook Premier  
May 10, 2020  
*Happy Mother's Day!*

**Piano Prelude**

**Call to Worship**

Sisters and brothers, let us gather together with glad and generous hearts.

**For many signs and wonders are being done among us.**

Let us break bread together and share our lives in common.

**Let us give what we can to all who have needs so that all people, no matter who they are, may regard us with good will.**

Let us devote ourselves to our prayers and to the gospel.

**For in this way God will add to our numbers every day.**

**Hymn** "Morning Has Broken"

1 Morning has broken

Like the first morning,

Blackbird has spoken

Like the first bird.

Praise for the singing!

Praise for the morning!

Praise for them, springing

Fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall

Sunlit from Heaven,

Like the first dewfall

On the first grass.

Praise for the sweetness

Of the wet garden,

Sprung in completeness

Where his feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight,

Mine is the morning,

Born of the one light

Eden saw play.

Praise with elation,

Praise every morning,

God's re-creation

Of the new day!

**Call to Confession**

Friends, in as much as God is our shepherd, let us not fear, but confess our sin that God may restore our souls.

**Prayer of Confession** (unison)

**Holy One, we confess to you and to one another that we have not always followed Christ's example. When we have been abused, we have been abusive in return. We have gone astray. Lead us back into your fold and guard our souls in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Friends, the promise of our faith is that if we entrust ourselves to the One who judges justly, we need not feel threatened, for we will be returned to righteousness. Having been brought back into the safety of God's fold, let us share our peace with one another.

**Prayer for Illumination**

Loving God, we pray that your Holy Spirit will strengthen us to be devoted to the teachings of your Word, that through it we may hear your voice and follow it into eternal life. Amen.

**First Reading** Acts 2:42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

**Second Reading** 1 Peter 2:19-25

For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

**SERMON** "When No One is Looking: Life on Lockdown"

1 Peter 2:19-25

- EX: It was the first day of Psychology class at a local junior college Everyone was nervous and the tension continued to build as everyone sat waiting for the professor to arrive. It was so silent that when a pen fell to the floor, all attention was drawn to the person who dropped it.
  - Then one brave student in the front row spoke up, commenting that because the teacher was only an associate professor, they could leave after waiting for only 15 minutes.
  - This sounded good to everyone.
  - It seemed that this comment broke the tension and a conversation took off from there.
  - Another student asked if anyone knew anything about the teacher.
  - There were numerous answers.
  - Some said that he was a hard grader, another commented that he was strict, one girl said that she heard he gave an overabundance of homework.
  - There were numerous comments after that however most were not very complimentary.
  - There were a lot of jokes at the teacher's expense.

- Finally, the student at the beginning who made the comment about giving an associate professor 15 minutes, stood up and said, "Well, it has been 15 minutes, but I'm not going to leave.
- In fact, I think I will stay and begin today's class."
- The instructor was in the front row the whole time!
- Had the students known that the instructor was in the classroom, would they have acted differently
- When you think no one is looking, how often is our behavior not totally in line with what is expected of us?
- As Peter addressed the disbursed Christians throughout Asian Minor, he was deeply concerned with how they behaved especially when they felt all alone.
- In the first chapter of his letter he addresses what we have in Christ such as a new birth, a living hope and salvation.
- In this second chapter, Peter is calling them out on their behavior and challenging his readers to live according to their new life in Christ free from malice, guile, insincerity, envy, and slander.
- However, this morning, the setting for our text is his specific remarks to those who are under the slavery system in Ancient Rome.
- Even though this Scripture text is written within the context of slavery, I feel there are timeless principles for us today that challenge us to live during circumstances that are uncomfortable has much to say to us today.
- When no one is looking during times of anxiety or discomfort, Peter is calling us to:

When no one is looking,

### **1. Do What is Right**

*19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval.*

- The key word here is CREDIT
- The word "credit" is from the word grace or graciousness.
- It is an expression used on whether or not someone is pleasing someone.
- In this case it is God.
- This could be translated as benefit, commendation, or blessing.
- In the gospels three times Jesus asks the same question "What credit is that to you?"
  - *Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?"*
  - *Luke 6:33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you?"*
  - *Luke 6:34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you?"*
  - In every case Jesus is pushing the comfort level by extending love, goodness, and loans to places where it may never be repaid.
  - Jesus summarizes later:
    - *Luke 6:35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.*

- Along the same lines, Peter is saying that what pleases God—if one is going to suffer—is suffering for doing GOOD.
- God is displeased when his people suffer because they have acted in some rebellious or sinful manner.
- In other words, it is more commendable to suffer from doing what is **right** than to suffer from what is **wrong**.
- You may be asking the question, why would Peter advocate for enduring unjust punishment?
- If the Christian fights back repaying evil for evil, this person becomes a mere victim when they are treated unjustly.
- But if the Christian bears the evil patiently, they have broken the chain of evil bondage in the power of the Lord.
- This person can show their confidence in God’s justice rather than taking justice into their own hands.
- The Christian response to unjust punishment is a perfect opportunity to show the uniqueness of being a follower of Christ.
- This is the essential teaching of Jesus in Luke 6
- I like what theologian Edmund Clowney writes in the Bible Speaks for Today commentary, “The privilege of those who are sons and daughters of the Most High is to imitate the magnificence of their Father’s mercy. They rise above simple justice to reflect God’s goodness and love. Unthreatened by evil, they can overcome evil with good, and in the midst of suffering show mercy to those who would show no mercy toward them.
- What drives this behavior?
- It is the awareness of God
- Max Anders in the Holman Bible Commentary says, “What pleases God is being mindful of God, cultivating a trusting awareness of God’s presence and of his never-failing care while we endure pain. When we are conscious of the presence of God in our lives, God gives us the necessary strength to bear the pain, and he extends his grace and mercy to enable us to respond positively as we continue to trust in him.”
- Friends, when no one is looking, do what is right.

When no one is looking,

## **2. Follow Christ’s Example—**

*21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.*

- In verse 21, Peter says those who have faith in Christ have been called to suffer for only one singular reason: Christ suffered for our sins.
- We have been called to follow Christ, to emulate his character and conduct, because he suffered for us.
- Peter says, the Christ left us an example.
- Does this mean we are suffer the same pain and suffering that Jesus did?
- No, we can not and do not suffer the same agonies that he endured, but we can follow Christ in the WAY in which he endured the suffering and in the way in which he respond to it.
- This is what is means to “take up your cross and follow me” in Matthew 16:24.
- Jesus’ followers were to deny themselves and to put to death their own plans and desires, and turn their lives over to Him every day.

- This is what we are to emulate.
- So in the next 5 verses, there are several examples of Jesus' life we can emulate—

22 *"He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."*

**a. Watch what you do and say**

- We see here a prophesy from Isaiah 53:9 *They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.*
- Where Peter emphasizes the sinlessness of Jesus as well as Jesus his innocence.
- If no one had the right not to suffer, it was Jesus.
- What can this mean for us?
- As we grow into Christlikeness in our own difficult and challenging circumstances especially in isolation, what would it look like we strived to be more like the sinlessness of Christ and innocence?
- As we live with the people who see us day in and day out, can they see the reflection of Christ in you?
- EX: My wife in our self-quarantine would say, "NO! Eric, your life is far from Jesus!"
  - God is not finished with me yet.
  - I must strive to watch what I do and say because my Savior and Lord committed "no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."
- Question: Are you watching what you do and say with those closest to you?
- Regardless if our current circumstances brings us suffering or not, or if we are in isolation or in public, we are to model after the life of Jesus and live a life above reproach by simply watching what we do and say.
- I believe God is calling all of us is to continue to strive toward the living in holiness, and have behaviors and speech that demonstrate our growth in Jesus Christ.

23 *When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten;*

**b. Do not retaliate**

- If anyone who saw Jesus' suffering first hand, it was Peter.
- Peter could personally testify he was there in the courtyard when Jesus was tried by the Sanhedrin, the trial before Pontius Pilate, when the chief priests and elders accused Jesus of many things, he saw that Jesus made no reply.
- Peter knew when Jesus hung on the cross that Jesus did not complain
- What Peter is doing here is that he lifts up the patience and endurance of Jesus and suggests that we follow his example.
- Question: what is your natural response when you feel that you have been wrongfully accused, mistreated, or unfairly blamed?
- If we are to follow the example of Jesus, we are to not retaliate, but to cling to the presence of God.
- Many times in Scripture non-retaliation is emphasized:
  - Romans 12:20 *No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads."*

- When we retaliate evil with evil, we join our offender in their error because Jesus told us to repay evil with good — *Romans 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*
- Retaliation is when we take matters into our own hands.
- BUT *Hebrews 10:30 For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people."*
- Often people use the text, "Eye for an eye tooth for a tooth" as the basis for the right to retaliate, *Leviticus 24:19-20 Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered.*
- What people do not see is that those verses were to give ethical guidance for those who are appointed a judges or legislators.
- We are not to take legal matters into our own hands.
- Jesus says in *Matthew 5:38-41 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile.*
- I am thankful that Jesus offered the example to not retaliate when he was on the cross.

*but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.*

### **c. Yield to God**

- Yielding to God means to trust that God will ultimately be the judge.
- Paul writes in *Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*
- *James 4:12 There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?*
- Judgement ultimately belongs to God alone
- Yielding to God means letting God be the judge because that is a part of God's character.
- Being omniscient or all knowing, God is so much better at being a judge than we are.
- Question: Do you regularly entrust yourself to God who is our judge, or do you enjoy playing God and administer justice as you see fit?
- Friends, Peter lifts up the example of Jesus, and calls us to yield to God.

*24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.*

### **d. Live in righteousness**

- The purpose of Christ's death on the cross is to produce new life in the believer.
- By means of Christ's death all those who come to him end their old life and begin a new one devoted to righteousness: "*we might live for righteousness*"
- "Righteousness," as it is used here, suggests the right kind of living, the ethical lifestyle that has been the focus of this major section of text.
- Peter is encouraging his readers to live rightly.

- By living for righteousness, we live out a marvelous declaration of God's righteousness through our words and deeds.

## **Offering**

Church, our God has prepared a table before us and our cup overflows. So let us give generously from our common wealth, as our way of praising God and giving to those in need.

### **Prayer of Dedication**

Holy and generous God, you have anointed us and we are yours. Bless these tithes and offerings that they may become green pastures and still waters for any and all who need your comfort and restoration.

## **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.

## **Special Music** "Psalm 23" Wayne Jones, soloist

## **Prayers of the People** (Standing) —written by John Ballenger

This day, our God, as we gather, we pray for mothers. We give thanks for mothers, who love and care for their children and are loved and cared for right back. Watch over them, strengthen them, protect them. But we also pray for women who have longed for children and don't, and can't have them. And we pray for women who had children who shouldn't have—for children who grew up without the love and care they deserved and needed. We pray for grandmothers—for those for whom grandparenting turned out to be what they dreamed it would be and for those for whom it didn't. We pray for mothers with sick children and children with sick mothers. We pray for mothers with lost children and departed children—children with lost mothers and departed mothers—for those who grieve what they had, and those who grieve what they never had. We pray for these women who experienced emotional loss. We pray for all the dilemmas and doubts and fears, frustrations and heartaches and richness and wonder and sleeplessness of parenting. We pray for mothers who parent by themselves. We pray for women who carefully negotiate life with step children, and for women trying to adopt, and women hoping fertility treatments will renew disappointed hope. We pray for mothers whose children have grown up and moved out and those whose children have grown up and not moved out. This complicated day, our God, we're reminded again of just how much will not fit on a Hallmark card. but does fit into Your full awareness of all that is—that does fit into your investment in love and grace in and through all circumstances. We pray for mothers in all the fullness of what all it can mean—informed by what we know of all those we know—gratefully trusting You to know so much more than we do or can—gratefully trusting You with the hearts

of those we love—gratefully trusting You with all the deep pain and joy of this day, 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** "For the Beauty of the Earth"

1 For the beauty of the earth,  
For the glory of the skies,  
For the love which from our birth  
Over and around us lies.

Refrain:

Lord of all, to Thee 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)

3 For the joy of ear and eye,  
For the heart and mind's delight,  
For the mystic harmony  
Linking sense to sound and sight.  
(Refrain)

4 For the joy of human love,  
Brother, sister, parent, child,  
Friends on earth and friends above,  
For all gentle thoughts and mild.  
(Refrain)

5 For Thy Church, that evermore  
Lifteth holy hands above,  
Offering up on every shore  
Her pure sacrifice of love. (Refrain)

### **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.

### **Piano Postlude**