

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

November 15, 2020

Why Good Matters

Ring of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations;

you have been our home throughout all the ages.

You were there before the world was made and will be forever.

From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

*Hymn PH 559 "We Gather Together"

1 We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing;
He chastens and hastens His will to make known;
The wicked oppressing now cease from distressing,
Sing praises to His name; He forgets not His own.

2 Beside us to guide us, our God with us joining,
Ordaining, maintaining His kingdom divine;
So from the beginning the fight we were winning;
Thou, Lord, wast at our side; all glory be Thine!

3 We all do extol Thee, Thou leader triumphant,
And pray that Thou still our defender will be.
Let Thy congregation escape tribulation;
Thy name be ever praised! O Lord, make us free!

*Call to Confession

God's love has destined us not for wrath, but rather for salvation. Therefore, let us confess our sins to the One who is eager to save.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Loving God, we confess that we have sinned against you by not honoring you or one another. When we place our iniquities before you, it is your love that sheds light on our wayward deeds. As we stand in awe of your constancy for us, we ask your forgiveness through the mercy of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon

Sisters and brothers, when we acknowledge our human limitations and turn to depend upon our everlasting God, we grow wise in heart to God's commands. You are freed to love another, for your sins are forgiven by the mercy of Christ. Amen.

*Gloria Patri (PH 579)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

***Passing the Peace**

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— “The peace of Christ be with you”

Prayer for Illumination

Come, Holy Spirit, open our minds and hearts this day, that we may be illumined by your living Word and walk together as children of light. Amen.

First Reading Psalm 123:1-4

To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! As the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, until he has mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Special Music “Bless This House” Betty Norment, soloist

Second Reading Titus 3:3-15

For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.

When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing. And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

Children’s Sermon Pastor Eric

- Good morning children!
- I have two different types of items here.
- One is a mirror, and the other is binoculars to help you see far.
- Q: Which one do you like better? Seeing yourself or seeing far?

- Yes, they are used for different things, but sometimes we often get stuck on one or the other.
- When you only think about yourself, you cannot take the opportunity to see others.
- If you are always worrying or wanting things for yourself, you cannot be very good at helping others.
- Today in our Bible lesson, we read, "And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs"
- This means do good by being helpful, but you cannot be very helpful when you are only looking at yourselves.
- We must turn our attention to others, then we can do good.

SERMON "Final Thoughts About Doing Good"

Titus 3:3-15

- Today we conclude our series in the book of Titus.
- The theme of the whole book is "Doing Good Matters."
- In every chapter, Paul repeatedly mentions that the goal of our faith is to do good in the midst of a culture that is morally corrupt and easily influenced by the egotistical false teachers that are causing division and turning people away from the Lord.
- There is a phrase that "Christians are to be IN the world but not OF the world"
- We come in contact with the world, and yet we retain our distinctive kingdom character that exemplifies good and refuse to let the world press us into its mold.
- The key is to remain distinctively good.
- Paul wrote this letter in fear that the testimony of good was at risk
- So he writes these last paragraphs as final closing thoughts about doing good.

Final Thoughts About Doing Good-

1. Look Where We Have Been (v. 3)

3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures,

- Paul here wants Christians to remember their past regardless of how extremely unpleasant it was
 - There are two reasons for this:
 1. It forms a basis for humility and compassion for others
 2. It emphasizes the change that Christ has brought upon us
 - In the past a person who does not know Christ is foolish, disobedient, and led astray.
 - A person who does not have Christ has this type of lifestyle and thinking
 - Like all people everywhere, we belong to a fallen system and lived according to our fallen sinful nature.
 - This is in direct contrast to the Christian life who is gracious and lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - No longer is the Christian in bondage to various passions and pleasures of the world, but we are those who can "render every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."
 - When a person has a new life in Christ, N.T. Wright says, "It's God's free gift, and that it involves being made clean from everything which had previously polluted us."
 - A person who can look back upon their life, has the ability to learn from their mistakes, and use that memory to drive them forward into a new behavior in Christ.
- passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another.*

- “Malice and envy, despicable, hating one another” are the qualities of people who do not know God.
- A. Duane Litfin in the Bible Knowledge Commentary says, “This is the brutish existence of people apart from God. While a veneer of civilization often obscures the bleak truth, the slightest crack in the surface of society reveals the reality behind the facade. The painful truth is that apart from God people degenerate into little more than animals wrangling over bones.”
- Paul could have easily turned away from this morally corrupt island, but because of the grace of God and its power to transform lives, he had deep compassion upon the people of Crete.
- This is why he writes to them to look back upon their past, and to move forward into a new identity and behavior in Christ.

Final Thoughts About Doing Good-

2. Remember what God Did (vv. 4-8)

4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,

- We find the same word “appeared” (which is where we get our word epiphany) used earlier:
 - *Titus 2:11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all*
 - *Titus 3:4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared*
- It almost seems like Paul is repeating himself because of significance of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ
- According to this text, the advent of Jesus Christ is the demonstration of the goodness and kindness of God
- In the Old Testament salvation came through looking ahead to God’s provision.
- Throughout the Psalms, you often read about the cries for the faithfulness of God to **save** them from their enemies.
- This is the forward looking aspect of salvation in the OT.
- For us today, it comes through looking back on God’s provision.
- This is why Paul writes again “when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior”
- Friends when we take the time to look back at the goodness and love of God, and how God saved us from our sins with the gift of His Son Jesus Christ, it has a way of shaping our behavior.
- This is what Paul wanted as he concluded his letter to Titus.
- We must continually look back at the actions of God in order to appreciate what we have today.

*5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his **mercy**, through the water of rebirth and **renewal** by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he **poured out on us richly** through Jesus Christ **our Savior**, 7 so that, having been **justified by his grace**, we might become **heirs according to the hope of eternal life**.*

- Notice the six lavish actions of God.
- Paul is communicating that God does not hold anything back when it comes to our salvation.
 1. The first thing to note is that salvation is by the mercy of God - There is nothing we do to earn salvation but a free gift given to us by His mercy. (v. 5)
 2. Salvation includes the idea of renewal - when we turn from our old ways of life we are renewed by the Holy Spirit. (v. 5)

3. The Holy Spirit takes on the image of baptism and is richly poured out on us (v. 6)
4. The means of salvation is through Jesus Christ our Savior (v. 6)
5. Salvation includes being justified by his grace (v. 7)
6. The goal of salvation is that we become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (v. 7)

- The six lavish actions of God may seem like theological insignificance, but it is not.
- EX: The gift of God's salvation is like a spider web. Although it seems frail and weak, it is infinitely stronger than anything humans are able to produce. Scientists have discovered that the chemical makeup of a strand of spider's web is up to ten times stronger than steel and can be stretched up to twenty percent of its original length without breaking. In fact, it has been calculated that if a spider's silk were increased to the width of pencil, its web could stop a Boeing 747 in flight!
- In the same way, spider silk is stronger than anything we could understand, the salvation of God is the confidence and strength that we may not fully understand, but the assurance that we will have God's salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

*8 The saying is sure. I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to **good works**; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone*

- Lastly the the evidence of the salvation God has given to us is "good works."
- Good works are the external actions or deeds of faith in contrast to the inner qualities such as grace or faith.
- Living your life as a Christian by remembering what God has done for us in our salvation is a motivation that should drive us to not desire our former way of life but to continue to doing good.

Final Thoughts About Doing Good-

3. Avoid Profitless Controversy (v. 9-11)

9 But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

- Here we see Paul concluding his letter with a cluster of miscellaneous messages.
- What unites them is that they are all requests or instructions to Titus to do something.
- In this first section, Paul is encouraging Titus to avoid profitless controversy, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law.
- This is a common theme in Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy:
 - *1 Timothy 1:3-4 stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith.*
 - *1 Timothy 6:3-4 Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, 4 is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words.*
- This is also a common theme found here in Titus.
- Paul's greatest fear is the people of love to stir up controversy in the local church because they have been damaging the testimony of good works throughout the region.
- So Paul elaborates here on what to do with these people in the house churches in Crete.

10 After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, 11 since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.

- Remember there were people who were advocating useless things who were exerting a divisive and destructive influence in the local church
- Titus was instructed by Paul to faithfully and lovingly give such people 2 warnings.
- If that did not work, he was to have nothing to do with them.
- The assumption is that a failure to respond to two warnings is a clear sign that the offender is “warped and sinful, and self-condemned.”
- Again, because of the multiple chances Paul gives to these people who are causing division, he is still offering hope of redeeming such people.
- Doing good is promoted when there is not strife in local congregations, therefore we must to avoid profitless controversies.

4. **Keep Doing Good Works (vv. 12-15)**

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to **come to me** at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing. 14 And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive. 15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

- (v. 12) The first act of good works is a replacement for Titus while he is to spend the winter with Paul.
- We do not know anything about Artemas, but Tychicus is mentioned 5 times in the New Testament. He is known to Paul as a dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord and probably had great confidence in him.
- Artemas or Tychicus was to cover for Titus while he spent the Winter with Paul so that there is not an absence of the driving influence of the leader to promote doing good.

13 Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing.

- Zenas and Apollos were probably the couriers of this letter that Paul wrote.
 - So after their delivery, Titus was to make sure that they lacked nothing.
 - Now Titus was not to do this by himself, but to lean upon the local body of Christ—
- 14 And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.

- Here we see one example of how a local congregation was to put their faith into action and do “good works”
- Why is Paul saying this?
- “so that they may not be unproductive”
- This is a fascinating statement here.
- Given the lethargic nature of this culture, finding opportunities to serve helps a local congregation live out their faith in a productive.
- This means the local church can fall into a passive, unproductive state
- And when there is no mission, people look for controversy.
- This is what Paul wanted to avoid.

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

- Paul closes his letter with affectionate greetings from those that are with him.

- He then admonishes Titus to offer the same affection to others.
- By the way, offering affection to others in the name of Christ another way to do good.
- He closes with a classic salutation, "Grace be with ya'all"

Final Thoughts About Doing Good—

1. Look Where We Have Been
2. Remember what God Did
3. Avoid Profitless Controversy
4. Keep Doing Good Works

Offering

In giving to God, we grow closer to God. Let us offer our life and labor to the One who draws near and freely gives the treasure of eternal life in Christ.

- There are three way to give...

***Doxology** (click)

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.

Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

***Prayer of Dedication** (click)

Holy and loving God, you are our home and dwelling place forever. Thank you for giving your people a gift beyond all value, the treasure of eternal life. Bless our gifts that we offer you this day. With them may we share your love with others, that all may enter into your eternal joy. Amen.

***Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

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.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the needs of the world, saying, O God of hope, **awaken us to your new world.**

We pray for all leaders and people of the world that we may expose the powers and principalities of injustice and work together to build your reign of peace. O God of hope, **awaken us to your new world.**

We pray for all who yearn for your light to break forth in places of sickness, toil, or danger, that we may find our way to your glorious realm through our love for one another. O God of hope, **awaken us to your new world.**

Your coming is the dawn of a new day that brings hope and healing to our lives. Fill your church with the light of your love that we may leave this place and offer your love to others. O God of hope, **awaken us to your new world.**

Give us the courage to acknowledge human frailty, limitation, and even death, with confidence in your eternal plan. For we dwell forever in light with you, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, 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** PH 555 "Now Thank We All Our God"

1 Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom this world rejoices;
Who, from our mothers' arms
Hath 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 in His 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,
Who reigns in highest heaven,
To Father and to Son
And Spirit now be given.
The one eternal God,
Whom earth and heaven adore,
The God who was, and is,
And shall be evermore.

***Benediction**

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)

[click]