

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

November 22, 2020

Why Good Matters Series

Ringling of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

***Call to Worship**

The Lord God is our shepherd.

We are the people of God's pasture, the sheep of God's hand.

God will seek the lost, feed the hungry, and strengthen the weak.

But the proud and power-hungry will be fed with justice.

Come let us worship the Lord.

***Hymn** PH 551 "Come, Ye Thankful People Come"

1 Come, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of harvest home:
All is safely gathered in,
Ere the winter storms begin;
God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied;
Come to God's own temple, come,
Raise the song of harvest home.

3 For the Lord our God shall come,
And shall take the harvest home;
From each field shall in that day
All offenses purge away;
Give the angels charge at last
In the fire the tares to cast,
But the fruitful ears to store
In God's garner evermore.

2 All the world is God's own field,
Fruit unto God's praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown,
Unto joy or sorrow grown;
First the blade, and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear:
Lord of harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

4 Even so, Lord, quickly come
To Thy final harvest home;
Gather Thou Thy people in,
Free from sorrow, free from sin;
There forever purified,
In Thy presence to abide:
Come, with all Thine angels come,
Raise the glorious harvest home.

***Call to Confession**

With sincere and repentant hearts, let us name our sins against Christ and one another.

***Prayer of Confession** (unison)

Sovereign God, we confess that we are not ready for your holy realm. You guide us toward right paths, but we refuse to follow where you lead. You love and feed and care for us, but we fail to love and serve others. Forgive us, merciful God, so that we may return to your fold and rejoice in your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Lamb upon the throne. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

However long we wander, however far we stray, God's steadfast love endures forever. Sisters and brothers, be assured: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

***Passing the Peace**

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

***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.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, open your Word. Give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation, that our eyes may be enlightened and we may know the hope to which we have been called; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

First Reading Psalm 23

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; 3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Special Music

"Fantasia" by Telemann
Ally Donnelly, flute soloist

Second Reading Ephesians 1:15-23

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18 so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. 20 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22 And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Children's Sermon Pastor Eric

SERMON "Why Gratitude is Essential"

Psalm 23:1-6

November 22, 2020

- Every time I climb into an airplane, I marvel at all you can see flying at 30,000 feet.
- I remember one time, I was flying over Las Vegas at night, and the pilot made an announcement that we were over the city and everyone marveled at the beautiful sight of all the lights and buildings from the sky.
- It is a perspective that you do not see too often because life normally is not at 30,000 feet.
- We often get so caught up in the ground level weeds of life that we have fail to see the beauty of everything around us from a higher perspective.
- Recently, I was trying to quickly think about all that I am thankful.
- To be real honest, I struggled with my list.
- "What is wrong with me, where I cannot think past my own family, work and friends?"
- I came to a realization that I was only looking upon my life at ground level, but the moment I was able to think about being grateful from a larger, 30,000 foot perspective, my gratitude list exploded exponentially.

- Thanksgiving is always a great time to press the pause button, and try to change our perspective so that we can see the hand of God upon our world.
- This morning, I wanted to take a familiar psalm that everyone knows (or has memorized) and show you from a 30,000 foot perspective of how God is active in our lives.
- Will you take a few moments and forget about the here and now? Forget about the weeds that are all around us, and let's go on a journey to see God's hand upon everything in our lives.

Why Gratitude is Essential

1. God Provides

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;

- This classic psalm begins with an imagery that shapes the whole psalm with the Lord or God as a shepherd.
- Notice, the text says, "my shepherd."
- This is the personal human connection that makes this imagery not just animals mechanically obeying the shepherd, but it is personal.
- If King David is the sheep, he is declaring that God is personal to him, and God is **his** shepherd.
- How often do you see God as YOUR shepherd? Who do you turn to when you face uncertainty? To whom do you turn for direction?
- The shepherd imagery is one that many early readers could relate because a shepherd portrayed the strong leadership of royalty who also offers tender loving care.
- A shepherd would actually live with his sheep 24/7 with unwavering devotion, day and night, both in fair weather and bad, to nurture, guide, and protect his sheep.
- The shepherd would assume full responsibility for the needs and safety of his flock, even risking his own life for their protection.
- God is our shepherd. God is your shepherd.
- The shepherd here does such a wonderful job that it says, "I shall not want" or that God provides for every need of his sheep.
- Have you ever stopped and thanked God for his provision like a shepherd provides for his sheep?
- In the hurried pace of our lives, do we forget that God provides for ALL of our needs?
- In this text green pastures are offered to us to have peace and rest.
- Still waters are offered to us to provide us refreshment and replenishment.
- When was the last time you allowed God to give you peace, rest, refreshment, and replenishment?
- If you have difficulty thinking about what to be thankful, then you have not allowed the shepherd to guide you into green pastures and still waters.
- I encourage you to take the time to experience the peace, the rest, the refreshment, and the replenishment of God.
- When you do, you will raise your gratitude quotient, and be thanking God for things you never thought about.

he leads me beside still waters;

- Did you know that sheep are afraid of running water?
- They will not drink from a moving stream.
- The shepherd needs to take a few rocks and dam up the water so that the sheep are able to drink from quiet waters.
- This means that God the shepherd wants to take us to places to experience his quiet peace so that we can drink from the living waters that God provides.
- Are we taking the time to drink from the quiet pools that God creates for us?
- If we were to focus upon the care of the shepherd—
 - through leading toward the quiet pools of refreshment,
 - the green pastures of peace, and
 - provision of all of our needs,
- We have much to be thankful. Our gratefulness must never cease.

2. God Guides

3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

- The word restoration has the imagery of straying sheep being brought back into the fold.
- But the word in other OT passages also carries the idea of being brought to repentance or conversion.
- The word for "soul" could be translated as "life"
- God restores our "lives" by forgiving our sins and offers us new beginnings.
- The shepherd draws us back to himself.
- Since sheep are known to go astray and easily wander off, the shepherd must continually **guide** them in the right paths
- In the same way, God guides us into paths that are only the best for us.
- EX: I remember when Google Maps came out. It has been one of the most helpful tools to help people get to their destination. Many of us often wonder what life would be like without Google Maps. I found this cute rendition of Psalm 23:
Google Maps is my shepherd;
I shall never lose my way.
It makes me lie down in the plushiest hotels,
and leads me to the finest restaurants.
It guides me along the right route
for punctuality's sake.
Yea, though I travel through the shadows of urban high rises,
I will fear no break downs,
for you provide quick access to roadside service.
Surely GPS tracking will follow me
all of the days of my life.
And I will rely on my Google Maps forever.
- In the same way we are lost without Google Maps, God guides and directs our lives along right paths like a shepherd leading his sheep toward safety.

3. God Comforts

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

- In verse 4, the language changes.
- Rather than describing the shepherd in the third person: he makes, he leads, he restores, the point of view changes to the second person or you: "you are with me, your rod and your staff" making the shepherd more experiential and personal.
- Have you ever noticed how God desires to move in our lives from being in the third person, to the more personal second person?
- This is the difference between knowing God personally or knowing about God intellectually.
- David declares, here, that as adversity would come upon him, he would lean upon the providence of God.
- Notice, darkest valleys are apart of the walk with the shepherd.
- These dark times will always be there, and will always a part of the journey, but we are assured that God is with us and comforts us.
- Some of the shepherds tools: The rod is a oak club, 2 feet in length, that was used to defend the flock against wild animals. The staff is the shepherd's staff with a bent hook on one end used to push branches aside, pry sheep from thickets, drive off snakes, pull fallen sheep out of holes, and lead them to narrow paths.
- In David's mind these tools were sources of comfort to him and symbols of God protection and comfort.
- Notice the words, "for you are with me."
- Because of the presence of the Lord, we do not need to be afraid.
- **Friends, in the midst of a worldwide pandemic, you are never alone.**

- God keeps you close to himself!
- ILL: On the morning of September 11, 2001, Mike Hingson sat at his desk on the 78th floor of the World Trade Center North Tower. He was not alone. Under his desk lay napping his faithful companion, Roselle—a two year old, yellow lab guide dog. Mike Hingson is blind.

Upon impact from the plane, the building shuddered, and Roselle was roused from her sleep. She ventured from beneath the desk and waited for a command to spring into action. Unsure of which way to go to escape the encroaching chaos, Mike took firm grip of her harness and simply said, "Forward."

That was all the encouragement Roselle needed to take control of the situation. With smoke and noise, congestion and confusion filling the hallways, Roselle purposefully and determinedly steered Mike from his desk to the center stairwell. "Roselle was calm as ever and did not sense any danger in the flames, smoke, or anything else around us. I chose to trust her judgment because Roselle and I were a team. I clutched Roselle's harness and with focus and confidence we headed down the 1,463 stairs to fresh air and freedom."

- In the same way, as we traverse the challenges and difficulties of the darkest valleys of life, there is no experience, no valley that we must journey alone because of God's comfort and presence.

4. God Nourishes

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

- In this verse, David shifts from God being the shepherd to God being the gracious host.
- We all know that it is the goal of any host is to meet the needs of their guests.
- When David says, "*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies,*" he is saying that even though he is surrounded by people who want to bring him harm, David recognized that God was with him by supplying his needs as a host would care for a guest.
- Even in the mist of difficult circumstances, David lacked nothing!
- This is an interesting metaphor.
- Notice God does not offer us all the weapons of a local armory to fight our enemies, but...
- David is saying that God is this lavish host that makes sure our needs are met, we are well supplied from the appetizers to the finishing touch of desert.
- God furnished David with sustenance without trouble or difficulty on David's part
- What do you feel you lack? Do you feel you lack something from God?
- In order to have an attitude of gratitude, we must change our thinking to knowing that God graciously offers us all that we need.
- When David says, "You anoint my head with oil," this is a custom of the host to provide oil for the head of his honored guest to refresh and sooth the weary traveler.
- In other words, the anointed head speaks of the Lord's welcome.
- Friends, when you feel hard pressed on all sides, do you see God as the gracious, welcoming, soothing, abundant host who desires to see that all your needs are satisfied?
- Thanksgiving will take on a whole new perspective of gratitude if we see God behind every fearful circumstance constantly supplying for our every need.
- The last phrase, "My cup overflows" demonstrates the lavish nature of the host who keeps the beverages filled for his guests is a metaphor how David is blessed with the lavish provisions of God even in the midst of an adversary.
- If you want to up your gratitude quotient, look for the lavishness of God in the midst of adversity.
- When we are nourished by God even during the midst of adversity, we can only thank God for His presence and provision.

5. God Abides

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

- The word "goodness" of God is demonstrated in his abundant care and promises.
- This is the evidence of God's blessing.
- The word "mercy" or sometimes translated "love" of God is his covenantal commitment to bless his people with his promises.
- Rather than being pursued by enemies who seek David's destruction, God's goodness and mercy follow the psalmist.
- God's presence abides with him no matter the circumstances.
- Here David realizes that God's good, loyal love would go with him everywhere through all his life.
- So David concludes that "I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- The house of the Lord reminds David of being in the temple.
- But no matter where he is and regardless of the circumstance, God abides with him in such a way that he feels like he is in the presence of God anywhere.
- David has fellowship of God as if the temple was present wherever he goes.
- You see the ultimate goal in David's heart was a face to face relationship with His Lord forever.
- Rather than a vague uncertainty that God abides with him, he had confidence.
- In the same way, we can have the same confidence as David that God abides with us forever.

1. God Provides
2. God Guides
3. God Comforts
4. God Nourishes
5. God Abides

- As you gather around your Thanksgiving table, to the degree God is active in your life, is the degree of our thankfulness because of the actions of God in our lives.
- This is why gratitude is essential.

Offering

In gratitude for the immeasurable gift of Jesus Christ, let us bring our tithes and offerings to God.

*Doxology

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

Holy God, use us, and these gifts, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and honor your presence in all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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

Our Shepherd satisfies our needs; in faith, let us turn to the Lord in prayer.

O Lord, our God, we pray for the church.... As you have made Christ the head of all, help us to live faithfully as his body, continuing his mission in the world.

O Lord, our God, we pray for all nations.... Drive out those wolves in sheep's clothing who abuse the weak and scatter the flock. Come and save us; bring justice and peace.

O Lord, our God, we pray for this community.... Help us to see Christ among our neighbors, serving those who are hungry and thirsty, naked and lonely, sick or in prison.

O Lord, our God, we pray for loved ones.... Remember the people of your pasture: rescue the lost, bind up the broken, heal the sick, and feed those who hunger.

Loving Shepherd, lead and guide us— in green pastures and by still waters, in right paths and through dark valleys, until we feast with you in glory and dwell in your house forever; through Jesus Christ our Savior, 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 554 "Let All Things Now Living"

1 Let all things now living
a song of thanksgiving
To God our Creator
triumphantly raise,
Who fashioned and made us,
protected and stayed us,
By guiding us on
to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us,
Pure light goes before us,
A pillar of fire shining
forth in the night,
Til shadows have vanished,
all fearfulness banished,
As forward we travel
from light into light.

2 By law God enforces.
The stars in their courses,
The sun in its orbit,
obediently shine;
The hills and the mountains,
the rivers and fountains,
The deeps of the ocean
proclaim God divine,
We too should be voicing
our love and rejoicing,
With glad adoration
a song let us raise,
Till all things now living
unite in thanksgiving
To God in the highest,
hosanna and praise.

*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 (please be seated for the postlude)