

## Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Service Liturgy We Never Had

March 22, 2020

### \*Call to Worship

God does not see as mortals see. We look on the outward appearance; God looks on the heart.

**Jesus, Light of the World, give us eyes to see as you see!**

Once we lived in darkness, but now—as children of light, we are called to what is good and right and true.

**Jesus, Light of the World, give us eyes to see as you see!**

### \*Hymn      Presbyterian Hymnal 356 "Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing"

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of God's unchanging love!

Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by Thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed his precious blood.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for Thy courts above.

### \*Call to Confession

As children of God's light, we are called to do what is pleasing to the Lord: to participate in what is good and right and true, and expose what is unfruitful and evil. Knowing that we turn from the light, we bring our confession to God, so that what is hidden in us becomes visible, and the shadows of our hearts may be illumined by grace.

### \*Prayer of Confession      (unison)

**Gracious God, we are people who still love darkness rather than light. We keep shameful deeds secret, but flaunt our occasional acts of virtue. We see ourselves as blameless, but pass judgment on others. We do not stand firmly enough with those who are vulnerable, but step back, protecting ourselves. Forgive us, we pray. Bring us into your light that we may see ourselves rightly. Bring us into your light that we may know ourselves loved. Bring us into your light that we may live more fruitful lives. Keep raising us, we pray, from the deadness of sin, and shine upon us with your grace. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

**\*Assurance of Pardon**

The psalmist assures us that God's goodness and mercy will follow us, even pursue us, all the days of our life. As God's forgiven people, receive this goodness and mercy, and live a new life in the grace of Jesus Christ. We will live as children of the light for Christ shines on us.

**\*Passing the Peace**

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

**And also with you!**

Let us share with one another a sign of Christ's Peace.

**\*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**

Gracious God, illumine our hearts and minds as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed, so that by the power of your Holy Spirit we may see what is good and right and true. And seeing, help us to do what is pleasing to you, so that your glory becomes visible in our words and deeds. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

**First Reading**      1 Samuel 16:1-13

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me." And the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you." Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, "Do you come peaceably?" He said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD'S anointed is now before the LORD." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him;

for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

## **Second Reading**      John 9:1-12

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

## **SERMON**      "Boot Camp for the Soul: REDEFINITION"

John 9:1-12

March 22, 2020

- ILL: In *The Mask Behind the Mask*, biographer Peter Evans says that actor Peter Sellers played so many roles he sometimes was not sure of his own identity. Approached once by a fan who asked him, "Are you Peter Sellers?" Sellers answered briskly, "Not today," and walked on.
- Our identities are usually shaped by who we experience ourselves to be.
- Often, we feel the pressure to define ourselves through our occupations, favorable outcomes, grades, appearance, or what other people say about us.
- The problem lies when we experience failure.
- If we experience failure through job loss, criticism, or broken relationships, the foundation of our identity is shattered.
- We will find ourselves scrambling towards something or someone else to help us make sense of our identity.

- A stable sense of self cannot exist when we place our identity on external things because when circumstances change, our identity changes too.
- Our identity must come from somewhere else.
- God is the only one who can look into our hearts and offer us a new identity through faith in Jesus Christ
- *Galatians 2:20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- Throughout Scripture, Jesus offers a new identity to people who encountered him: leper (Luke 17:11-19), woman at the well (John 4:1-26), and today in our text, Jesus offers a new identity to the man born blind.
- This text teaches us what happens when we are redefined by Christ.

When You Are Redefined by Christ:

### **1. Look Forward Rather Than Backward**

*1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.*

- The assumption here: Jewish tradition taught that the a person born with a handicap was because the person's parents sinned.
- The idea comes from this verse that describes God:
- *Exodus 34:7 keeping steadfast love for the thousandth generation forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, yet by no means clearing the guilty, but visiting the iniquity of the parents upon the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.*
- To this, religious leaders added the thought that the disabled person might have sinned before birth.
- So when the disciples asked the question in verse 2, they were asking out of theological curiosity rather than compassion.
- Jesus refuses to point fingers for the blame of man's condition
- He does not look back toward what the man did, nor his parents, nor his grandparents and correct their theology
- He simply stated that the blind man's predicament was an opportunity for God to do work rather than a punishment for **past** sins.
- God's work included miracles, and demonstrations of his power and love
- This is the **forward** thinking Jesus wanted the disciples to grasp.
- All misfortune has its ultimate purpose in the glorification of God by the manifestation of the greatness of God!!!!
- In the same way when we are redefined by God, we need to look forward to the power "of God's works" revealed in us.
- Why dwell on the past?
- God wants us to focus on Him, and what he can do now in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

### **2. Live in Urgency to do God's Work**

*4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.*

- Jesus realized the work of God through his life on earth was limited.

- The contrast between day and night symbolizes the mission of Jesus where the night is the close of his mission and the day would be his limited time on earth. *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.*"
- Jesus clearly wanted his disciples to see the urgency of ministry at hand rather than the theological discussions that the religious leaders often performed
- There is much to learn from Jesus' emphasis here.
- In the same way that Jesus saw his life and ministry with a sense of urgency, our lives are limited, and the work we are able to accomplish for the Lord must not be bogged down by theology but practical theology.
- We must understand our ministry of being the hands, feet, and words of Jesus with a sense of urgency rather than living one day at a time with all the time in the world
- When we are redefined by Jesus, the urgent focus of what we do in ministry redefines us rather than the distinctions of theological understanding of our past
- Remember, Jesus utilized average fishermen to be his disciples rather than the theological religious leaders of his day
- The world changing impact of those who follow Jesus is fulfilled by disciples who understand this urgent missional mandate.

### **3. Turn to Jesus for Healing**

*6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.*

- Why did Jesus use saliva and mud? We are unsure.
- We are sure, that the man had to have an encounter with Jesus "so that God's works might be revealed in him."
- Notice, the healing did not take place immediately and the elaborate directions to wash in a particular pool was a matter of obedience.
- Did you hear that?
- God's miraculous work in our lives is sometimes not immediate.
- God is not like a slot machine where you pull the crank and get immediate results either good and bad.
- Jesus desires to work much deeper in our lives...in our very soul to REDEFINE us as his disciples!!!
- When we turn to Jesus for the healing of our past, it takes time, faithfulness, and perseverance for us to see God at work.
- *Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*
- God does not want us to focus only on our iniquities, but on the one who says, *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free"* (Luke 4:18)
- Only Jesus can bring healing to our checkered past—the mistakes, failures, or sins that we have never told anyone....so that we can be released as prisoners and set free.
- Being REDEFINED means God wants to demonstrate His work to be revealed in you!

#### 4. Understand Many Will Not Understand

8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

- In this text, John is clearly showing how everyone in town is confused with the blind man's identity.
- This is one of the most difficult aspects of our soul training in being REDEFINED.
- When we rely on the transformative power of God in our lives, on the outside, we often look the same.
- And often times people only tend to look at the externals rather than the transformed heart and soul.
- Notice, when the townspeople questioned him if he was the blind man they once knew, he kept saying, "I am the man!"
- The fact that he had to repeat himself demonstrates that no one believed.
- No matter how much we use our words to try to convince others, many still will not understand.
- Does this mean we should give up in being salt and light for the world?
- NO! Because the most powerful words we have toward an unbelieving world is our story of how God has worked in our lives.
- This will always be a tension that with which we must learn to live.
- Because of our soul training in being REDEFINED, we will become a more stronger and faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.
- Later in the text the blind man says in the midst of a theological debate with the pharisees about Jesus,
- *John 9:25* He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see."
- If I can encourage you in your soul training, regardless how everyone see us... because we have been redefined by Christ, our testimony of God working in our lives remains the most powerful word to the world today.

\***Hymn** Presbyterian Hymnal 101 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

When I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
Save in the death of Christ my God;  
All the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**\*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.

**Prayers of the People**

God our faithful Shepherd, we depend on you for everything we need: for daily food, for guidance and protection, for healing in injury and comfort in sorrow.

You respond in abundant provision. Thank you for your tender care of us. Thank you for soothing the wounds of this life. Thank you that in the most challenging and difficult times, you are with us, as Shepherd, Host, Home.

Knowing your faithfulness in our lives, we bring before you the lives of others, the cares of this world, entrusting all things to your goodness and mercy. Bring healing to those who are ill in mind, body, or spirit. Bring release to those who are held captive by old hurts or new bonds that oppress and entangle.

Protect us from the spread and the tragic effects of COVID-19. Strengthen the families separated in self-quarantine, and protect those who live together.

Bring freedom to those unjustly accused, relief to those burdened with debt, comfort to all who suffer from abuse of any kind. By the power at work in Christ, break down the walls of hostility we build so that we may learn to live together graciously.

We remember those living in the midst of drought and famine. We pray for rain to fall and crops to grow, and for generosity to overflow from our own hands and resources, until all your children receive their daily bread; until all your children have clean water to drink; until all your children have adequate shelter and medical care. Compel us to be better stewards of creation so that our habitation is sustainable and responsible.

Loving God, help us to see the world as you see it; to see others as you see them; and to see ourselves rightly, too. Pursue us all with your goodness and faithful love until goodness and faithful love fills every heart and informs every

action. We pray these things in the name of the one who came that we might see, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

### **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**      Presbyterian Hymnal 339 "Be Thou My Vision"

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Nought be all else to me, save that Thou art--  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,  
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:  
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,  
Great God of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true word;  
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,  
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

### **\*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.