

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

August 30, 2020

Love Like That Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Pastor Eric Hoey

- The elders of our church made the decision on Tuesday to suspend Sunday services, Sunday school, and nursery throughout the month of September. In two weeks, they will reevaluate and see if we are to return together sooner.
- We are hosting a Marriage Night on September 12 where married and engaged couples can laugh and learn from marriage experts and discover how to honor God through their relationship. You can register to watch from our church as a host site or you can register to watch virtually from your own homes. www.marriagenight.org
- HCCO = ramen noodles during August.

Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

The God of our ancestors calls us to worship.

Praise the Lord!

Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Let us worship God!

*Hymn PH 356 "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

1 Come, Thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace; Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.	Jesus sought me when a stranger, Wandering from the fold of God; He, to rescue me from danger, Interposed his precious blood.
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Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love!

2 Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.

3 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

Jesus Christ overcame evil with good so that all people might be saved from sin. Let us then confess our need for grace, confident of God's forgiveness.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

God of mercy, we confess that, like the disciples, we set our minds not on divine things but on human things. Doubting your loving care, we grab for more than we need. Doubting your loving purposes, we shrink from living as your followers. Doubting your loving plan, we become stumbling blocks in

your creation. Forgive us that we may gain new life in you, for it is in Jesus' forgiving name we pray. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Jesus took up his cross for our salvation. In return for our old life of sin, he promises a new life of grace. Know that you are forgiven and be at peace.

***Passing the Peace**

Please take a moment to text someone now or in the future a note of encouragement, "The Peace of Christ be with you!"

***Special Music**

"Brethren, We Have Met to Worship"
Wayne Jones, soloist

Prayer for Illumination

Holy Spirit, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush, speak to us now in the reading and proclaiming of your word. Amen.

First Reading Ezekiel 34:1-16 Mara Dassell

The word of the LORD came to me: Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel: prophesy, and say to them—to the shepherds: Thus says the Lord GOD: Ah, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. You have not strengthened the weak, you have not healed the sick, you have not bound up the injured, you have not brought back the strayed, you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep were scattered, they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.

Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As I live, says the Lord GOD, because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild animals, since there was no shepherd; and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves, and have not fed my sheep; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: Thus says the Lord GOD, I am against the shepherds; and I will demand my sheep at their hand, and put a stop to their feeding the sheep; no longer shall the shepherds feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouths, so that they may not be food for them.

For thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will search for my sheep, and will seek them out. As shepherds seek out their flocks when they are among their scattered sheep, so I will seek out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land; and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord GOD. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back

the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

Second Reading Matthew 23:13-32 Jim Bates

“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.’ You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? And you say, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.’ How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

Children’s Sermon Pastor Eric

- Some time ago, I found this apple. It was a beautiful, perfect, red apple. Today, you can buy an apple where everyone of them are perfect. If you go the produce section, they will shine a light on it, display each apple in its own holder. We love perfectly beautiful apples. So when I found it, I cut it open because I do not like biting into apples.
- When I cut it open, it smelled, it was moldy, it was rotten to the core.
- How is it that it can look so good on the outside but not on the inside?

SERMON “Love Like That: BOLD”
Matthew 23:13-32

- There is a set of YouTube videos called English in a Minute to help new English speakers learn various idioms in our language.
- Take a look at this one minute video called "Elephant in the Room"
- So an "elephant in the room" is 1. a problem everyone knows about but does not want to talk about or 2. a truth everyone knows, but ignores.
- The question I ask this morning, what does it take to remove the elephant in the room?
- KEY: It takes someone who is BOLD enough to stand up against the cultural norm and speak the truth.
- According to Les Parrott, he says, "Jesus confronted a similar lack of congruence in his own religious culture. In fact, he boldly shattered the pluralistic ignorance of his time. He was fearless when it came to being real, authentic, and truthful."
- He calls this quality of Love Like That to be BOLD.
- We began this series with being
 - Mindful: seeing like Jesus what others do not see
 - Approachable: being approachable rather than elitist
 - Graceful: demonstrating God's forgiveness and unmerited favor
 - Bold: being able to speak the truth
- This morning I wanted to look at a text that I have always wanted to study, it is the seven woes of Jesus.
- How did Jesus boldly tell the truth?
- He confronted the religious leaders in the following ways:
- Background:

1. Hindering God's Kingdom

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them."

- The word for "woe" is used in a funeral lament.
- As Jesus speaks truth to the religious leaders, he mourns their spiritual state because on the outside they looked religious, but in reality, they were dead on the inside.
- The first elephant in the room was for rejecting the kingdom of God and blocking the way for others who want to draw near.
- Because of the antagonism the religious leaders had toward Jesus, their hostility turned many people away from Jesus.
- Many Jews looked to their leaders for direction.
- Their failure to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah had placed a stumbling block to everyone around them.
- Q: Has our lack of faith ever caused people around us from becoming closer to God?

2. Promoting Bad Discipleship

15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves."

- Many scholars have argued that the first century marked a period of unusual missionary zeal for Jewish converts.
- A convert was a Gentile who was won to faith in Yehweh, the God of Israel
- Jesus also confronts the frivolity of traveling over land and sea for a single convert.

- The problem Jesus was confronting was that corrupt, hollow, leaders filled with hypocrisy create corrupt, hollow followers filled with hypocrisy.
- Jesus calls the the convert under the learnings of a pharisee a "child of hell."
- This tells us that bad leaders produce bad followers, and Jesus is calling them out on their years of bad influence.

3. Lacking Integrity

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' 17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.' 19 How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; 21 and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; 22 and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

- This is the only woe where Jesus addresses the religious leaders as "blind guides" rather than hypocrites.
- This accusation was because of they were misleading people by creating their own rules and regulations about oath keeping.
- Their corruption added conditions to justify whether to not something is binding.
- For example, to swear by the temple was really not binding unless the oath maker swore by the gold of the sanctuary.
- Granted every society had various methods to keep oaths binding, but because of the corruption of the religious leaders in Israel, the standards for an oath kept changing according to the whim of the religious leader.
- In the Sermon on the mount, Jesus addresses this problem in the system:
- *Matthew 5:34* But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.
- Jesus boldly points out the lack of integrity of the religious leaders.

4. Majoring on Minor Issues

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

- The Mosaic law required a tithe from the land whether it be a seed from the ground or the fruit from a tree.
- Pharisees were well known for their attention to the smallest detail when it came to the tithe.
- They focused much of their attention on items that were small in insignificant that were easily found in a small garden.
- Mint, dill, and cumin were meticulously counted so that 10% of these insignificant herbs could go to the Lord.
- Rather than counting the produce from the land for sustenance, they analyzed the herbs that only contribute to flavor.

- Jesus boldly points out that they have spent so much time in the things of insignificant detail that they have neglected matters of importance like justice, mercy, and faith.
- This is an easy trap for everyone.
- EX: I have been in session meetings that went to midnight where more time and energy had been focused upon the proper micro management of the young staff member rather than on the mission and vision of the church. It is always easier to spend time on the fringes of ministry rather than tackling the hard issues at the core identity of the ministry.
- The religious leaders had inverted the priorities to the extent that Jesus boldly says "You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."
- Both the gnat (creature that swarmed) and the camel (chews its cud) were considered the smallest and largest unclean items.
- Metaphorically speaking Jesus points out, they were more occupied by being contaminated by a tiny gnat than by a huge camel.

5. Faking Holiness

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

- Jesus boldly uses an illustration of the cleanliness of a cup and plate to emphasize the fact that holiness or righteousness is not about externals but begins with the internal.
- Everyone wants eating utensils that are clean because that is the part that touches food or drink, and the outside is not so critical.
- But the scribes and Pharisees have been cleaning the outside of the utensils and neglecting the inside.
- They have been creating rules and regulations that give the appearance of righteous living when all along their hearts and souls have been decaying inwardly and will never create a clean vessel.
- Friends, I am so thankful that faith in Jesus Christ is all about the soul care that is needed for one's integrity, righteousness, and holiness.
- *1 John 1:9-10* *If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*
- There are certain things that cannot be faked, and Jesus boldly tells them that their hearts first need to be cleansed from within.

6. Contaminating Everything

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. 28 So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

- Whitewashed tombs was a common practice to make everything look good for the pilgrim who passed through.
- Tombs were whitewashed so that they could easily be identified to prevent unknowing traveler to come into contact with the tomb.
- You see, a Jew would become ceremoniously unclean for seven days if he touched a dead body or a grave.

- This would defeat the purpose of coming to Jerusalem for something like Passover festivities.
- The Pharisees were like whitewashed tombs.
- They were beautiful on the outside, but on the inside they were filled with everything that is unclean, therefore they contaminated everything around them.

7. Fabricating False Identity

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, 30 and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets.

- The Pharisees were basically monument keepers.
- The prophets of old were highly respected and the pharisees built tombs and monuments for them out of respect.
- The religious leaders wanted to give the impression that if they lived in those days (when that prophet was persecuted) they would be supporting the prophets and be against those who murdered them.
- The Pharisees saw themselves as heirs to the prophets.
- Jesus' final and most bold rebuke said that they are heirs to those who killed the prophets!
- WOW!
- Matthew 23:32 Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors.
- Here we see, Jesus was predicting their own plans to plot against him and put him to death.

1. Hindering God's Kingdom
2. Promoting Bad Discipleship
3. Lacking Integrity
4. Majoring on Minor Issues
5. Faking Holiness
6. Contaminating Everything
7. Fabricating False Identity

What Does Jesus' Boldness Mean for Us?

- Jesus lived in a way that was transparent, straight forward and direct, and for us to love like Jesus, we need to do the same as well.
- It begins with being **truth tellers**.
- Matthew 18:15 "If another member of the church sins against you, go and **point out the fault** when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.
- When Jesus is telling us to be truth tellers, we are to be bold rather than passive.
- In fact saying nothing is not what Jesus wants.
- The times we do not speak up is because we are really afraid of being rejected.
- But to have the boldness of Jesus is to speak the truth in love.
- ILL: A pastor agreed to conduct the funeral of a local criminal named Jim. His brother Bill promised that if the pastor said that Jim lived like an angel, he would donate \$50,000 to the church. If he didn't, the pastor would be a dead man. At the funeral, the pastor told how Jim robbed everyone he could, cheated, lied and was unfaithful to

his wife. Bill was getting more and more furious. Then at the very end the pastor said, "Jim was guilty of all these things, but compared to his brother Bill he was an angel."

- Les Parrott continues in his book:
Jesus didn't speak from a self-centered heart. He did it within the context of pain for anyone who is missing the true measure of God. His conviction was so powerful that he couldn't care less what others thought. His truth telling came from a deep and personal anguish for those who were hung up on superficiality, externals, and hypocrisy. He spoke truth to save them from themselves. He spoke truth in love.
- Les Parrott says, "Not only does a life marked by truth-telling open us up to the richness of our spiritual relationship with God, but it empowers unto live meaningfully and lovingly with each other."

Offering

The apostle Paul encourages us: do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. In loving service to this loving Lord, we now return to God a portion of the bounty God has provided.

*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 of holy ground, like Moses, we question our fitness to serve heaven's purposes on earth. Overcome our qualms with the assurance of your presence; bless these offerings that, through them, we may do your will; in the name of the triune One. 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

In peace, let us pray to God, saying, Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for the church, deliver it from evil, and make it holy in every way, that all people may see the light of your salvation through the witness of your faithful servants. For our pastors, teachers, and ministers, Merciful God, **hear our prayer....**

Uphold the leaders of governments. Give them sound judgment and merciful hearts, and lead them to do what is right in upholding the common good during this world wide pandemic. Merciful God, **hear our prayer....**

We pray for the damage from hurricane Laura. Bring healing, help, and restoration in the areas affected. Subdue the violence of storm, and heal the destruction from the floods, that life may flourish and every creature rejoice in the goodness of creation. Merciful God, **hear our prayer....**

We pray for peace across the racial tension in our country. Bring healing to the damage done from riots, and hope to those who are economically repressed. We pray for peace among fellow neighbors across racial, economic, and political divides. Merciful God, **hear our prayer.**

Bless children and those who care for them. Defend our children; enable them to thrive in mind and body and grow in wisdom and strength. Give them parents and guardians who are faithful in their duty to provide for their needs and guard them from danger. Merciful God, **hear our prayer....**

Heal those who are sick in body, mind, or spirit, and uphold those who are able to support them in their need. These prayers we offer through Christ by the power of your Holy Spirit, 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** STF 2223 "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord;
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored.

Chorus: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We Will work with each other, we will work side by side;
We will work with each other, we will work side by side;
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride.

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come;
And all praise to Christ Jesus, His only Son.
And all praise to the Spirit who makes us one.

***Benediction**

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