

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

March 27, 2022

Experiencing Lent Series

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

- Let's "Strike" Up Some Fun!! Today after worship service we will be "rolling" out to the new bowling alley in Henderson. Meet at Diamond Lanes Echo (1698 2nd Street - East Gate Shopping Center, 212-1697) @ 12noon. They have pizza and drinks there that you can order for lunch. You "gutter" come and join in the fun!
- CHANCEL CHOIR The Handbell Choir will meet this Wednesday, March 30th at 6:15 pm and the Chancel Choir will meet at 7:15 pm.
- 4 GOOD COMMUNITY will be hosting an open house to welcome the community to see the services they offer on Friday, April 1st from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. They are located at 1900 US 41 North (by Trees and Trends). They have a resource center, food pantry and a new soup kitchen. Everyone is welcome!
- MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION LENTEN SERVICES AND LUNCHEON The Lenten service and luncheon will be at Community Baptist Church this Wednesday, March 30th at noon.
- CANDY FOR EASTER EGG HUNT If you would like to donate any candy or small treats to put in the plastic eggs for our church Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday, please bring them to the church kitchen and place in the plastic bin. And, if you are able to help fill them the week before Easter, contact Cynthia.
- Hey Kids!... Come to church during the Sundays in Lent and collect a different colorful Easter egg each time you come. It will be so "egg"citing to have all 6 of them to decorate your room for Easter.
- ZOOM STUDY Everyone is welcome to join our series Experiencing Lent on Mondays at 7:00 pm. This series will help us prepare our hearts for Easter. Meeting ID: 984 3627 7403, Passcode: 500727
- THESE DAYS DEVOTIONALS The new These Days devotionals for April, May and June are available now and can be picked up in the back of the sanctuary.
- Christian Community Outreach The requested need for March is bar soap

Organ Prelude

Kristin Jones, Director of Music

*Call to Worship

Come, let us celebrate the forgiving, reconciling love of God.

**For once we were lost and felt so far away;
now we have been found and welcomed home.**

Know that God's love is lavished upon you forever.

We rejoice at the news of forgiveness and hope!

Come, let us celebrate and praise the God of Love.

AMEN!

*Hymn PH 466 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing

My dear Redeemer's praise,

The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of God's grace!

2 Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

3 Christ breaks the power of reigning sin,
And sets the prisoner free;
Christ's blood can make the sinful clean,
Christ's blood availed for me.

4 My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

***Call to Confession**

Trusting the grace promised to us in Jesus Christ, let us confess our sins before God and one another.

***Prayer of Confession** (unison)

Merciful God, we confess that we have strayed from your ways. Like the Prodigal Son, we have wasted our inheritance. You gave us the earth for our home, but we squander earth's resources and hoard its bounty. You gave us neighbors to love, but we pursue selfish ambitions. You gave us the commandments that lead to human flourishing, but we break your law and forsake your love. Forgive us our sin and bring us to repentance. Draw our wandering hearts back to you that we may find freedom in obedience to your love. Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

As a parent welcomes home a wayward child, so God embraces all who return in true repentance. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

***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**

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.

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

Prayer for Illumination

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit, open our minds and bodies to the re-creating power of your Word, that we may see the world through the mind of Christ and live in the world as a foretaste of your new creation. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

First Reading Psalm 65:1-13

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion; and to you shall vows be performed, O you who answer prayer! To you all flesh shall come. When deeds of iniquity overwhelm us, you forgive our transgressions. Happy are those whom you choose and bring near to live in your courts. We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, your holy temple.

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. By your strength you established the mountains; you are girded with might. You silence the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy.

You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

Special Music Handbell Choir

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Children's Sermon Pastor Eric

SERMON "Experiencing Lent: Almsgiving"

Selected Scriptures

- Did anyone take the Experiencing Lent Challenge last week?
- It was to take 30 minutes and confess our sins.
- I did it: I need to do this on a regular basis. I sat on our sofa where the sun was shining directly on me. I asked the God who is light to reveal the areas of sin and darkness in my life. I also asked myself, how am I not bearing the fruit of the spirit?

- [PRAYER]
- ILL: Two men were shipwrecked on an island. One of them started yelling, "We're going to die! We're going to die! There's no food! No water! We're going to die!"
 - The second man just sat there leaning against a palm tree. He was so calm it drove the first man crazy, "Don't you understand?!? We're going to die!!!"
 - The second man replied, "I make \$100,000 a week; we'll be found soon."
 - The first man looked at the second dumbfounded and asked, "What difference does that make?! We're on an island with no food and no water! We're going to DIE!!!"
 - The second man answered, "You just don't get it, do you? I make \$100,000 a week, and I tithe. Believe me, my pastor will find me!"
- **What is Almsgiving?**
- Almsgiving is one of the three pillars of the Roman Catholic Church to practice during the season of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving.
- Almsgiving is an act of donating money or goods to the poor or performing acts of charity.
- It is similar to our practice of giving up of our time, talent or treasure to the Lord.
- **Where does it come from?**
- In the OT, the term "almsgiving" is not used, but the idea was incorporated into the Mosaic Law when he ordered land-owners to leave to the poor the corners of the fields.
- *Lev. 19:9-10* When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.
- In Hebrew there is a word that carries a fuller meaning than "alms," and it is translated as "righteousness" which means charity in the spirit of uprightness or justice.
- Throughout the Old Testament the notion of alms (concrete aid given the poor) is understood primarily in the context of justice; just as Yahweh acts with justice, so too, must his worshipers.
- *Leviticus 15:11* Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."
- Almsgiving was fully integrated into the culture of Israel in the OT.
- In the NT, it comes from a Greek word meaning "pity, mercy."
- In its original sense, when you give alms, you are dispensing mercy.

- Almsgiving continued to be practiced during the time of Jesus and actually mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus discusses, "When you give alms..."
- This tells us almsgiving was a major part of the culture in the NT as well.

Principles of Almsgiving

1. Know God's Generosity (Psalm 65:11-13)

11 You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with richness. 12 The pastures of the wilderness overflow, the hills gird themselves with joy, 13 the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy.

- Here the Psalmist was convinced that Israel would have an abundant good year when God poured out his blessing on the land.
- Earlier in Psalm 65, God cares for the land: *Psalm 65:9-10 You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide the people with grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.*
- God blessing produces harvest and uncultivated areas to be enriched
- Flocks and grain flourish under God's blessing.
- God is so generous that the psalmist concludes that all nature shouts for joy.
- When the Israelites saw God's bounty, abundant fruitfulness testifies to God's blessing.
- God is a God of generosity rather than scarcity.
- Even in the New Testament we find evidence of God's generosity:
 - Jesus reveals God's abundance when he offers so much bread to people that there were 12 baskets left over (John 6:5-15)
 - Or when he makes the disciples catch so many fish that their boat nearly sinks (Luke 5:1-7)
- God doesn't just give enough, but God gives more than we **dare** to ask for.
- Almsgiving begins with a theology that our God is abundantly generous.

Principles of Almsgiving

1. Know God's Generosity (Psalm 65:11-13)

2. Dispense God's Blessing (Proverbs 11:24-25)

24 Some give freely, yet grow all the richer; others withhold what is due, and only suffer want. 25 A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water.

- This proverb contrasts those who give generously vs. those who do not.
- This is call for people be generous with their time, talent or treasure.
- To the extent you are generous with others, to the extent you will find yourself with plenty.
- If we hold back our time, talent and treasures, we will find ourselves always in need.
- *2 Corinthians 9:6-15 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with*

every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

- In God's economy, generosity often determines prosperity.
- A person must give in order to gain.
- However the gain or prosperity may not necessarily be equivalent in our own understanding.
- EX: If you give \$100, this does not say you will get \$100 in return.
- It is not a one to one ratio, nor are we to expect repayment of any kind, but our reward will only come from the Lord:
 - In His **way** and
 - In His **time**.
- Basically this is saying, since God generously gives to you, be generous to others.
- Open up the floodgates of the blessings of God, and allow God to bless others through you!!!!
- Take the risk, let go of the tight-fisted tendencies, and find the joy of being a generous giver.
- EX: In the computer world there is an old saying, "Garbage in equals garbage out." This is saying, you put bad information into a computer, you will get bad information out."
- In God's world, "blessings in equals blessing out."
- We are the connectors between God and the blessings of the world.
- The imagery is a connector not a dam that collects for a later day.
- Dispensing God's blessings is allowing God's abundance to flow through you!

Principles of Almsgiving

1. Know God's Generosity (Psalm 65:11-13)
2. Dispense God's Blessing (Proverbs 11:24-25)
- 3. Check Your Motives** (Matthew 6:1-2)

1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

- Almsgiving is not an opportunity to use it as a personal advertising campaign.
- Two phrases stand here, "in order to be seen" and "do not sound a trumpet"
- Both of these phrases tell me that—almsgiving requires all **ego** to be checked at the door of generosity.
- If our desire is to be seen and heard because of our giving, then we need to strongly reconsider.
- When we give with these motives, the text says, "you have no reward from your Father in heaven"
- This means you will not live "enriched" by God.
- Jesus was confronting the behavior found in the hearts of the the religious leaders.
- "Hypocrisy" was the word which Jesus used to characterize this display.
- Their hearts were so corrupt and motives were so wrong that they wanted everyone to know when they gave so that they could receive the maximum amount of praise from the people.

- This is why the text says, "Truly I tell you, they have received their reward."
- Meaning that is exactly what they got, praise from men, and not-from-God.
- ILL: Once upon a time, there was a gardener who grew an enormous carrot. So he took it to his king and said, "My lord, this is the greatest carrot I've ever grown or ever will grow. Therefore I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you."
 - The king was touched and discerned the man's heart, so when the gardener turned to go, the king said, "Wait! You are clearly a good steward of the earth. I own a plot of land right next to yours. I want to give it to you freely as a gift so you can garden it all." The gardener was amazed and delighted and went home rejoicing.
 - But there was a nobleman at the king's court who overheard all this. And he said, "My! If that is what you get for a carrot – what if you gave the king something better?" So the next day the nobleman came before the king leading a handsome black stallion. He bowed low and said, "My lord, I breed horses and this is the greatest horse I've ever bred or ever will. Therefore, I want to present it to you as a token of my love and respect for you."
 - But the king discerned his heart, so he took the horse and merely dismissed him. Seeing that the nobleman was perplexed, the king said, "the gardener gave the carrot for me, but you gave the horse for yourself."
- In the same way, almsgiving must always begin with motivation check. Am I doing this for God or am I doing this for myself?

4. Give in Secret (Matthew 6:3-4)

3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

- The way to avoid hypocrisy is NOT to cease giving, but to do so with such secrecy that we scarcely know what we have given.
- The right hand is normally the active hand, therefore we are to give in such a way that the left hand does not know what we are doing.
- Well how is this possible?
- Not only are we not to tell other people about our giving, but there is this sense here which we do not even tell ourselves.
- Idea here is that we are not to be self-conscious in our giving to a point that our self-awareness does not deteriorate into self-righteousness.
- We are to give in secret yet not let our minds fall into a spirit of self-congratulation.
- Since giving in the NT is an act of mercy, we must fight the temptation to turn an act of mercy into an act of vanity.
- This is when our principle motive in giving is not for the benefit of the person receiving the gift, but it is for our own benefit.
- John Stott calls it when, "Altruism and been displaced by a distorted egotism."
- So in order to put to death our sinful vanity, Jesus urges us to keep our giving secret from ourselves as well as from others.
- Christian giving is to be marked by self-sacrifice and self-forgetfulness, and not by self-congratulation.
- Our approval needs to only come from God.

4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

- When we give in secret, the text says, “your Father who sees you in secret will reward you”
- What exactly is Jesus saying?
- The principle here is that if **we** remember (our giving) God will forget, but if we **forget**, God will remember.
- Our purpose is to meet every need we are able to meet and leave the book keeping to God.
- What is the reward in this text?
- The reward is very personal, and I see it two ways:
 1. The best personal reward of the act of genuine love through almsgiving is seeing the need met.
 2. There is one more personal reward, it is know that you are pleasing the Lord.
 - Our motive for looking forward to His rewards should be— the anticipation of casting them as an offering at the feet of Jesus.
 - EX: When I buy a well thought out gift for Cynthia, the little boy in me gets so excited to give her the gift, I often cannot wait in anticipation to give it to her. “Want it now? Can I give it to you early?”
 - ISW: our generosity must be like the anticipated gift to bring before the feet of Jesus.
- Almsgiving is important because it is what God would want us to do.
- **Lenten Challenge: Do one thing this week to care for someone in need.**

Principles of Almsgiving

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2. Dispense God’s Blessing (Proverbs 11:24-25)
3. Check Your Motives (Matthew 6:1-2)
4. Give in Secret (Matthew 6:3-4)

*Hymn PH 370 “Just As I Am, Without One Plea”

1 Just as I am, without one plea
 But that Thy blood was shed for me,
 And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

2 Just as I am, though tossed about
 With many a conflict, many a doubt,
 Fightings and fears within, without,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

3 Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
 Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
 Because Thy promise I believe,
 O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

4 Just as I am, Thy love unknown
 Has broken every barrier down;
 Now, to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,

O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Offering

As people of the New Creation, let us offer ourselves and our gifts 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

O God, all that we have comes from you. Receive this offering and with it the offering of our lives, for we return to you only what you have so graciously given. Use us for the sake of Christ, in whose name we pray. 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

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For the church throughout the world, that all Christians may embody the reconciling love of Christ.

For the nations of the world and its leaders, that all may dwell in peace and that justice may be tempered by mercy,

For the planet Earth, God's gift to humankind, that all may share wisely its resources and conserve its riches for our children's children

For our enemies, that we may regard them with the reconciling love made manifest in Christ

For those who are sick or in trouble, for the defenseless, the weak, and the poor, that they may be restored to wholeness of life and livelihood

For the lost, for those who have abandoned God, friends, or family, and for those who have never known such love, that they may come to know the joy of love's embrace

Loving God, hear the prayers of your people for the sake of our world, and our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom we pray, 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 101 "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

1 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.

2 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.

3 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?

4 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.

***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)