

Presbyterian Church of Henderson
Worship Service 10:00 AM
September 25, 2022
Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

***Call to Worship**

When they call to me, I will answer them, says the Lord.

I will be with them in trouble,

I will rescue and honor them.

With thanksgiving and praise, let us worship God.

***Opening Prayer**

Eternal God, help us to measure our time, in faithful generosity, that your will be done, your kingdom come, for life everlasting, in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

***Hymn** PH 263 "Immortal Invisible, God Only Wise"

1 Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, Thy great name we praise.

2 Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice, like mountains, high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

3 To all, life Thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish; but naught changeth Thee.

4 Thou reignest in glory, Thou rulest in light,
Thine angels adore Thee, all veiling their sight;
All praise we would render; O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth Thee!

***Call to Confession**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sins, that grace might bridge,
and we might cross, the great chasm between us.

***Prayer of Confession** (unison)

Dressed in fine linen, we feast sumptuously every day, while others long to satisfy their hunger. We have Moses and the prophets, yet we remain unconvinced, waiting for some human warning. Forgive us. In your mercy, convince and comfort us, and lead us to righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

***Assurance of Pardon**

Through Christ we are carried away by the angels, comforted by Father Abraham, our hunger—satisfied, our agony—cooled, and our sins—forgiven. Believe the good news: in 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

God of the Prophets, by the power of the Holy Spirit speak your Word to us, and seal it within us, that we may heed your call. Amen.

First Reading Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler. You will not fear the terror of the night, or the arrow that flies by day, or the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or the destruction that wastes at noonday.

Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

Special Music "How Beautiful" by Twyla Paris Betty Norment, soloist

Second Reading 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good

confession in the presence of many witnesses. In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he will bring about at the right time—he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Children's Sermon Pastor Eric

- How many people like to go trick-or-treating?
- Why do you do that? CANDY
- Have you ever been to a house or store where they have this big, big, big, bowl of candy?
- Just above the sign it says, "Please take one"
- You are thinking, it is such a large bowl, no one would know if I took one, two or three.
- What do you do?
- Today, in our sermon we learn about a verse with two big words that says, "Pursue righteousness"
- What do you think that means?
- It means always doing what it is right.
- It means you don't cheat, lie, steal but always do what is right.

SERMON "Characteristics of Godliness"

1 Timothy 6:6-19

September 25, 2022

- Recently I went to the Global Leadership Conference simulcast here in Henderson where we were told that to not worry about taking notes, they had a person who takes excellent notes and can write summaries of the speaker's message accurately and succinctly.
- Wow, what a gift to be able to be able to distill the many words people speak into the essence of one phrase or word or picture.
- Q: If you were to distill the essence of the Christian life into one word, what word would that be?
- According to Apostle Paul in his letter to young Timothy, he would summarize the essence of the Christian life in one word, GODLINESS.
- What is interesting is that the word "godly" or "godliness" actually appears only a few times in in the New Testament predominantly from the hand of Paul himself!
- Yet the entire Bible is a book is really about godliness.
- In Paul's letter to Timothy, Paul uses godly or godliness multiple times.

- We are to pray for those in authority that we may live quite peaceful lives in all godliness and holiness. (1 Tim 2:2)
- We are to train ourselves to be godly. (1 Tim 4:7)
- We are to pursue godliness. (1 Tim 6:11)
- Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim 6:6)
- Godliness has a value for all things. (1 Tim 4:8)
- Jerry Bridges in the *Practice of Godliness* says, "It is both a privilege and duty of every Christian to pursue godliness, to train themselves to be godly, to study diligently the practice of godliness. We don't need any special talent or equipment. God has given to each one of us 'everything we need for a life of godliness.'"
- So what is godliness? What does it look like?
- A simple definition that Jerry Bridges uses: **Godliness is devotion to God which results in a life that is pleasing to Him.**
- So looking at Paul's text this morning, I want to identify five "Characteristics of Godliness" to help us understand what godliness looks like.

The Godly Life:

1. Lives with Contentment

6 Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment;

- Verse 6 picks up after Paul's discussion with Timothy in calling out false teachers who were vain, greedy, and self-absorbed.
- These false teachers were stirring up endless discussions and controversies in early Christian gatherings so that more attention could be drawn to them.
- Almost every time, they usually stirred up quarrels, envy, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction.
- They were not peacemakers.
- In fact, they infiltrated the church with a false persona of godliness thinking they could reap personal financial rewards.
- Paul has these false teachers to mind in his first statement, "*Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment*"
- It is almost like he is saying, this is better than the "pretense of godliness with the insatiable greed"
- Paul is saying that the secret to godliness is found in contentment.
- When you compare to the false teachers who were only into "religion" for the financial and personal ego benefits, a life of contentment stands in direct opposition to their unsatisfied life.
- The word contentment literally means self-sufficiency.
- But the sufficiency of oneself in this case is completely dependent upon the sufficiency of God.
- *Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*
- Our sufficiency must come from God in Christ and no place else.

7 for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; 8 but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these.

- In order to demonstrate that Godliness is not something to make material gain, he argues the futility of greed.
- Paul's argument begins with: We start life empty-handed and leave life empty-handed.

- Luxuries are not essential to a life of contentment; but the basic necessities are.
- Paul is teaching Timothy that the godly individual is content with what they have.
- There is no insatiable desire for more
- The godly individuals generally have peace with God, spiritual joy, assurance of salvation, and the conviction that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28)

9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

- Verse 9 shows the by-product of **greed** follows a downward spiral that ends in ruin and destruction
- Speaking of greed...
- ILL: A Chinese woman, surnamed Zhao, while making a connection at the Beijing airport, was told by security that she could not take an expensive bottle of cognac in her carry-on. Since it was too late to access her checked-in luggage, it appeared she had no choice but to leave it behind.
 - But Zhao was determined not to let a \$200 dollar bottle of Remy Martin XO Excellence cognac go to waste, so she drank the entire bottle! Now she faced a new problem, she was not allowed to board the plane intoxicated. Too drunk to stand, security--out of concern for her own safety--escorted her in a wheelchair to a room where she slept until a family member was able to come and pick her up.
 - Some things become so important to us that we have trouble letting them go.

10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

- Verse 10, Paul goes into more detail that the love of money is a root of evil that ultimately leads to faith abandonment.
- The solution to avoid this spiral of greed is **contentment**.
- Otherwise, we undermine our own spiritual health and contentment.

The Godly life:

2. Replaces Worldly Desires with Godly Desires

11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness.

- Like a coach calling his team to preform better than ever before, Paul addresses Timothy directly, "But YOU"...
- When a person studies the Greek written language, they learn that the word order in a sentence is extremely important because it suggests empahasis.
- Can you imagine what the first word in Greek here? YOU!!!!
- This is like a pointed finger that in direct contrast to illness of the false teachers who have abandoned Christ, "But, YOU Timothy, man of God."
- "Man of God" is frequently used in the OT to describe a person who is used by God.
- A servant of God is to "**shun** all this" or "**flee** from all this"
- Timothy is to pursue virtues and behavior that are the opposite of the false teachers.

- Q: What is this behavior?
- It is found in couplets.
 - Righteousness and Godliness:
 - Righteousness is uprightness in conduct with others
 - Godliness is related to one's relationship with God
 - Together you see the vertical and horizontal dimensions of faith that could easily be seen by others.
 - Faith and Love
 - If you read any of Paul's letters, these are the supreme Christian virtues that are usually found together
 - 1 Cor 13: "if I have all **faith**, so as to remove mountains, but do not have **love**, I am nothing"
 - Endurance and Gentleness
 - These are common Christian attitudes that Paul wants Timothy strive toward.
- Paul is exhorting young Timothy to FLEE from the temptations of the false teachers: money, notoriety, recognition and pursue these virtues of God desiring behavior: righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness
- EX: I will never forget the day when my doctor told me that I need to have a lifestyle change. Eat better and exercise more. I used to work for the denomination, I often had to travel to various presbyteries. I was given a large expense account with a daily spending limit on food. I remember that in order to maintain some kind of health, I could not eat everything I enjoy. I had to force myself to turn from eating anything I wanted on the menu, to eating the things that were healthy and good for me. This kept me from gaining 20-30 lbs like many of my colleagues.
- ISW: Paul is telling Timothy and us, that the life of Godliness requires **turning from** the things that stand in the way of a deeper relationship with God and **turn to** the things, activities, and lifestyles that are pleasing and desirable to God.
- The Godly life: Replaces Worldly Desires with Godly Desires

The Godly Life:

3. Fights the Good Fight of Faith

12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

- The words from the phrase "fight the good fight" come from the language of athletics and competition.
- It means to struggle for the good contest or agony.
- These words also describe the struggles of the Christian life.
- The idea is to exert every ounce of energy to win in the struggle to have a deeper faith.
- Paul also has in mind for Timothy to fight for the purity of the faith of the local community of believers.
- Because of the false teachers, he will be fighting for doctrinal truth.
- PAUSE: If you ever get the opinion that Christian faith is a passive religion, this text exhorts us to consider the opposite.

- In the phrase “take hold of the eternal life” is not saying that Timothy should work towards his eternal life like earning points in a customer rewards program.
 - To Paul, a life in Christ is the possession of each Christian both now and throughout eternity.
 - Timothy is to **live fully in his faith** in Jesus Christ.
 - Notice the phrase “*to which you were called and for which you made a good confession*” — this probably refers to Timothy’s public baptism
 - Paul is essentially saying that Timothy is to take hold of his life in Christ like an athlete running to cross the finish line.
 - In other words, the Christian life of faith is running with all your might.
- 13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession,*
- In this verse Paul encourages Timothy in two ways:
 1. Timothy’s work is done in the presence of God who gives life to all things.
 - God is the sustainer and creator of all living creatures
 - God is intimately involved in all affairs.
 - God is sovereign over all life—everyone, the false teacher, the upright, the powerful and the slave.
 - All these exist by God’s mercy and life-giving power.
 - We are cared for by his strength and goodness.
 - All of us have a calling—to the faith in Jesus Christ.
 - This life begins with faith and confession, and it grows in intimate fellowship with Christ, fulfilling **his life** through **us** in the world.
 - In the same way Timothy was to live a life of godliness and faithfulness, Jesus Christ also had a calling—
 2. Jesus Christ was called to fulfill God’s purpose
 - When Jesus was before Pilate for questioning, Jesus stated: “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (John 18:37).
 - Jesus never wavered from the call of the Father upon his life.
 - He persevered unto death.
 - Paul is saying to young Timothy, to have the same calling and perseverance Jesus had to fulfill His Father’s will.
 - Timothy, fight for it!

The Godly Life:

4. Pursues the Fullness of the Christian Life

I charge you 14 to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will bring about at the right time—

- Notice this is not a suggestion, or recommendation, but it is stronger....Paul is commanding Timothy!
- See the phrase, “Keep the commandment”
- Knute Larsen writes in the Holman Bible Commentary:
 - Timothy was to flee from unrighteousness and pursue the fullness of the Christian life. He was to devote himself to growing intimacy with Christ, to compassionate relationships with others, and unwavering guardianship of truth as found in Scripture. The full spectrum of life is to be lived under the

reign of Christ, and it is to be done with consistency so that no sin interferes with such a life. (Knute Larson, Holman BC, v. 14)

- This is not a Sunday event, but a life long pursuit and commitment until the coming of Jesus Christ.
- Paul then breaks into adoration of the God whom he loved and served.
he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

5. Gives God all Glory and Honor

16 It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

- Paul then describes this God who is beyond the created order.
- He began with God's transcendence: he alone is immortal.
- No one else and no other thing can claim this eternal existence.
- God has no beginning, no ending, no progression of growth or decline.
- Out of his life comes all other life.
- Out of his immortality he grants eternal life to others.
- When you think of God from this perspective, it become easy to give God all glory and honor all the time!

The Godly Life:

1. Lives with Contentment
2. Replaces Worldly Desires with Godly Desires
3. Fights the Good Fight of Faith
4. Pursues the Fullness of the Christian Life
5. Gives God all Glory and Honor

***Hymn** PH 422 "God Whose Giving Knows No Ending"

1 God, whose giving knows no ending,
From Your rich and endless store,
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom,
Costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by You, we turn to You,
Offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever,
Gracious donor of our days.

2 Skills and time are ours for pressing
Toward the goals of Christ, your Son:
All at peace in health and freedom,
Races joined, the church made one.
Now direct our daily labor,
Lest we strive for self alone;
Born with talents, make us servants
Fit to answer at Your throne.

3 Treasure too You have entrusted,
Gain through powers Your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred,
And to spread the gospel Word.
Open wide our hands, in sharing,
As we heed Christ's ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming,
Serving You by loving all.

Offering

We brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of the world. Let us give both the gifts we have been given and our truest selves with glad and generous hearts.

*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.
Amen.

*Prayer of Dedication

God who gives life to all things, and richly provides us with everything, use these, our offerings, to take hold of, and show us, the life that really is. 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

Answer us, O Lord, when we call on you; **show us your salvation.**

Hear our prayer, O Lord, our refuge and fortress, our God, in whom we trust: For those who are under siege from war or illness or any adversity— give them faith and hope for the future you are preparing. For those who live in fear of terror in the night or destruction in the day— be with them in trouble and satisfy them with long life. For those who live in comfort and ease, satisfied with gluttony, drunk with power, wasting their days with idle pastimes— show them the evil of their ways and the end that is coming if they do not repent. For those who are hungry or oppressed, those in prison, or burdened by heavy labor, for the orphan, the widow, and the immigrant— give them food and freedom, justice and joy, watch over them and show them your welcome. Merciful God, we offer you these prayers in the confidence that you alone have the grace to receive us and the power to deliver us; through Jesus Christ, who has risen from the dead. Amen.

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 361 "How Firm a Foundation"

1 How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in God's excellent Word!
What more can be said than to you God hath said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.

3 "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be near thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.

4 "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.

5 "The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

***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)