



St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTCOST

Sunday, August 16, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings on this Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost and welcome to worship! Literally the word worship means “to declare worthy.” When the congregation gathers for worship, we gather to declare that the Triune God – Creator, Redeemer and Spirit is worthy. Notice that worship is an action word, a verb. Often we will say that I am going to church this morning. In that context, church is a noun. Going to worship is a verb. As you prepare to worship this morning, is it going to be a noun or verb for you today?

WORD PICTURES OF GOD continues to be the worship theme for August and September. Jesus uses parables, word pictures, that he paints to teach us about God, God’s Kingdom and our place in that picture. Today we look at the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

Whether you are in the sanctuary or home, let us worship God!

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship — Lord God, you have declared that your kingdom is among us. As we worship, open our eyes to see it, our ears to hear it, our hearts to hold it and our hands to serve it. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD

RINGING OF THE BELL AND CHIMES

WELCOME

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

May our lives profess and proclaim that "our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth."
(Psalm 124:8)

Amen!

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker!

For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
(Psalm 95:6-7)

SALUTATION

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
(Philippians 1:2)
Amen!

The Lord be with you!
And also, with you!

GATHERING HYMN [Open My Eyes, That I May See](#)

OPENING PRAYER

Lord God, we have come to worship you this morning. We come from our tired world in need. But, first of all, please lift us out of our preoccupation with ourselves and our own needs. Allow us to see you with eyes of faith and to hear with ears of understanding, what you say to us. Make us thankful for all the good we have received from you and help us to do what is right. Make us fresh again! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

CALL TO CONFESSION

The psalmist models out our faith with these words: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me, and know my thoughts.” See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way of everlasting. We express our longing for God’s leading as we confess our sins. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Faithful God, we are here together as your servants, to praise you, to help others and to be with one another in worship and Christian fellowship. But before we continue our worship, we ask for your forgiveness in our lives; for those times when we do the things we wish we hadn’t done; and for those times when we don’t do the things we know we should do.

(silent reflection)

Free us from our past mistakes and past failures and help us to look forward to a good week and in making a difference in the lives of others. Through Jesus Christ we pray, Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. As a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.

(Psalm 103:8,13-14,17-18)

WE HEAR AND LISTEN TO GOD’S WORD

GOD’S DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES

He has told you, O mortal, what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

(Micah 6:8 NRSV)

MINISTRY OF MUSIC [*O Worship the King with Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring*](#)

Duet with Paula Allison-England and Debbie Bigelow

Arranged by Weekly and Arganbright

SCRIPTURE LESSON

New Testament — Luke 10:25-36

HYMN OF RESPONSE [*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*](#)

WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

God, you are the giver of every good and perfect gift; and so today we are reminded of the gifts that we receive from your hand. You are the source of our lives; for every breath that we take and every day that we are given. For each day and the gracious provision, we receive from you, we give thanks. We give thanks for your gifts of music and musicians; for those who dedicate their lives to reach so that our lives might be enriched. For those working with their hands to build our homes and those who till the land to put food on our tables, we give thanks.

In this everchanging world of information, we pray for those who are making difficult decisions; decisions that influence our lives and decisions that have an impact of the lives of others. We pray for our president, the congress, our governor, legislators, mayors and council, school superintendents and teachers, parents and children. It is sometimes difficult to know that right way. Save them from arrogance and pride, and give wisdom so that the path that gives life may be chosen.

We pray also for those members of the congregation. For those who have concerns about family, health and who wonder where all this is going. Give us strength and encouragement to be faithful disciples and servants of Christ. Give us just enough hope to get out of bed in the morning and to enjoy the gift of the day that you give. We pray this in Jesus' name and who taught us to pray:

**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.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever.
Amen.**

PARTING HYMN [*God of Grace, God of Glory*](#)

BENEDICTION

As you prepare to leave the sanctuary, remember that while worship is concluding, living the Christian faith is just beginning for the week, so as you go:

God be in your head and in your understanding.

God be in your eyes and in your looking.

God be in your mouth and in your speaking.

God be in your heart and in your thinking.

God be at your end and at your departing.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

AMEN!

POSTLUDE

SERMON – *The Parable of the Good Samaritan – Who is Your Neighbor?*

SCRIPTURE

New Testament — Luke 10:25-36

This is a WORD PICTURE OF GOD, told in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It seems that one of the experts in Jewish Law had been putting Jesus to a test measuring his Orthodoxy. “Teacher,” he asked, “what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus replied with a counter question, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” Is this your specialty...what does the Old Testament say about it?

The lawyer answers, “Love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus says that you have answered rightly. But the lawyer senses that he hit on something. So, he asks, “who is my neighbor?” “How do I show love to him?”

So, Jesus launches into this parable. “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among some robbers who stripped and beat and departed and left him half dead. Now by chance, a priest was going down that road and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side...so likewise Levite, when he came to the place, saw him, passed on the other side too. But a Samaritan as he journeyed, came to where the person was and had compassion on him, bound up his wounds, took care of him, and took him to the Holiday Inn and told the innkeeper to take care of him and whatever money is spent, I will pay you back when I return.

And now a question for the lawyer. Which of these three proved to be the neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers? With whom do you identify and relate in this parable? The victim? The priest? The Levite? What is your avenue of entry into the story? Most often I have heard the Parable interpreted as, be the Good Samaritan, help out those who are victimized...be the good person, be kind to your neighbor, there are even Good Samaritan Laws built into our legal system.

There are a number of levels of understanding this parable, so let’s take a closer look at these people. The road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a dangerous, narrow and windy road with sudden twists and turns, making it an easy hunting ground for robbers. When Jesus told this parable, he was telling about what was constantly happening on that road.

So, here’s this traveler, either a naïve or a reckless person, traveling alone on that dangerous road. People rarely traveled that road alone and definitely not if they were carrying valuables.

Seeking safety, they traveled in numbers or in caravans. This traveler had no one to blame but himself.

The priest walks by, no doubt he was remembering that those who touched a dead man was unclean for 7 days. He could not see, but probably feared that the man was dead and to touch him would mean that he would lose his turn of duty in the temple and he didn't want to risk that. So, he set the claims of ceremony and temple liturgy above helping a person in need.

Next was the Levite, who seems to have gone nearer to the man before he passed by. Bandits in that day were in the habit of using decoys, where one of their numbers would act as the wounded person and when the unsuspecting traveler stopped to help, would be overpowered, beaten and robbed. So, the Levites motto was, "safety first;" he would take no risks.

Finally, here comes the Samaritan. Jesus listeners would expect to hear that now the villain has arrived. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans, because they were people from the other side of the tracks. They were a social and religious outcast. They were half breeds, descendants of inner marriages between the Israelites and Persian colonist who settled in the city of Samaria after 721 B.C. A Jew would not permit a Samaritan to touch them, much less minister to them. Now it was this man who seems to be a regular traveler along this road, because he knew the innkeeper and the innkeeper trusted him enough to pay upon his return for the care of the wounded traveler. It was this social outcast who alone, was willing to stop and help.

So then, Jesus asks the pharisees the question, who is the neighbor? Obviously, it is the person who helps one who is in need. There are plenty of instances for us to be this Good Samaritan and stop, and reach out to help people in their time of need. So, the neighbor, our neighbor, is defined not so much by geography, but by need.

But let's look at another layer of meaning. The parable forces the question to those who are listening to it. Jesus is challenging those listeners with this question, "Who among you would permit yourself to be served by a Samaritan?" Only those who are not in a position to resist such aid. In other words, only those who are truly victims at the full mercy of the Samaritan.

Only those who understand this, are able to understand what the Kingdom of God is all about. Only those who have become like a victim on the road to Jericho are able to understand what it means to receive God's mercy. The victim is totally helpless.

Let's look and learn something from the victim. It's easy to blame him isn't it? He shouldn't have been walking down that road alone. That's not a smart decision. It is easy to blame the



victim for being stupid and then withhold compassion. If we see a person's sickness as a result of their own behavior, then it is easy to distance ourselves. If a smoker gets cancer, they brought it on themselves, for the homeless it is the result of poor planning, the obese shouldn't have eaten so much, the unemployed should have seen it coming, they brought it on themselves...so we distance ourselves and walk on the other side of the road like the priest and the Levite.

It's the Samaritan who doesn't establish blame and extends mercy first. Jesus wants us to see ourselves like the person in the ditch...ignorant, foolish, careless and weak. It calls to first identify the weakness in our situation, the victim whom God makes the recipient of his mercy. Just as this nameless traveler on the road to Jericho was made the recipient of the Samaritans mercy, so are we to see ourselves and the anonymous victim which makes us the recipient of God's mercy.

The apostle John, sums up this parable like this, "We love because he first loved us," (I John 4:19). Love like this is to be shown to our neighbor, it does not come from human nature or out of religious nature. It doesn't even come from imitating the Good Samaritan, it is not something we create at all. It comes when we learn the love of God from our helplessness.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, you often come to us in the form of a Samaritan, despised, looked down upon, and yet you stoop to bind up our wounds, heal us and make us whole. Thank you! In your holy name we pray, Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

-  Pastoral Relations will meet today following Worship Service.
-  The Consistory will meet on **Monday, August 17th at 5:00 p.m.**