

Home Service for June 2, 2024

Welcome and Announcements

You may also find listening to some of your favorite hymns helpful in worship.

There will be no Home Service next week since I am at my Granddaughter's birthday party.

Before we speak, God knows our thoughts and minds completely, calling us into fellowship this day.

Call to Worship:

Almighty God, we thank you for revealing yourself as Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit. Thus, we celebrate Trinity Sunday. For your triple revelation, which in various ways shows forth your incomparable love, we gather to rejoice before you. Accept our profound joy. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Almighty God our Father, you dwell in mystery and majesty. By your mighty Spirit you renew and sustain all creation. Through our Lord Jesus Christ you reveal your glory and your love. Made bold through faith, we seek your awesome presence. Come to us in our weakness, that we may be transformed by your strength. Send your Spirit that we may learn to love you -- and our neighbor -- with all our heart and all our soul and all our mind and all our strength. All glory to you, one God, now and forever, Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Holy God, we are a people of unclean lips. We find it easy to make promises, and easier still to wriggle out of them. We slip into gossip, in the guise of sharing necessary information. We berate other drivers for weaving in and out of traffic. We are rude to telemarketers. How can we praise you when our mouths are so familiar with curse words? Yet you call us to be your messengers despite our imperfections. In your mercy, take away our guilt and blot out our sin. Help us to use our gift of speech to tell the good news of your Son. Amen.

Words of Assurance:

If we live according to the flesh, we will die; but if by the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the body, we will live. Hear the good news that comes to us from God: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven. Know that your lips and your lives have been made clean.

Read Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.

² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.

³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.

⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.

⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts,^[a] God!
How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

Prayers of the People:

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, you form one communion as three persons. You create promise in our souls for new life. You redeem us by forgiving our sins and making us new. You sustain us in times of trial and call us forth as instruments of your peace. For these good gifts, we are thankful.

God, Creator, for your glory shining forth in sky and sea, in the changing light on the hills, in the flight of birds, in the plants of the field, for the gift of life in all its fullness, we thank you.

Jesus, Redeemer, for blessing children, healing the sick, raising up the lowly, suffering the brokenness of the world in your own body, that we might have fullness of life, we thank you.

Holy Spirit, Comforter, for breathing new hope and strength into our lives, breaking down barriers, drawing human beings together in love, resisting all that diminishes fullness of life, we thank you.

Holy Trinity, in all that we do and say and are, may we always choose life, for ourselves, for our families and for our neighbors. May we know that, as three persons in one purpose, you provide all that we could ever need or want. You hear our prayers. With your blessing, you help us attain new heights of faith, understanding and connection with others. May we know you through communion with you as Three-in-One, even in our ignorance. 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is The kingdom, and the power and the glory forever and ever. AMEN

Read the Old Testament Lesson: 1 Samuel 3:1-20

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

²One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel

was lying down in the house of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ A third time the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. ¹² At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹³ For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God,^[a] and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

¹⁵ Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁶ but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

Samuel answered, "Here I am."

¹⁷ "What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."

¹⁹ The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 4:5-12

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of

darkness,”^[a] made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 2:23–3:6

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?”

²⁵ He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.”

²⁷ Then he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.”

⁴ Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent.

⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Message

In our Epistle Lesson, we heard how the Lord tells us we have treasures in jars of clay, which may not make much sense at first. Yet, the Lord reminds us that these jars of clay refers to mankind, that we are jars of clay. When we look in Genesis at creation, we read: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being"(GENESIS 2:7). Thus from the dust, the jars of clay were formed.

Paul said there is a reason that God put into jars of clay His treasures. That is so we would be reminded that we have no power and that they are as fragile as a jar of clay, but God has all-surpassing power. This power is to sustain His clay jars; an all-surpassing power to make sure that this divine treasure is taken care of. God who said, "Let light shine" made light shine in the hearts of believers. Paul said, "He made the light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." As we see God's glory, we see that the treasure that is in us as clay pots is God's love. The Lord reminds us that He is light and that His light is our light to guide us on the path of life.

When there are difficulties in our life, the Lord uses them to strengthen us, to test our faith, to increase our love for Him. There is no darkness in His will for us. He causes all things to work for our good. Realizing that, our lives are changed. We look at the Lord and realize that He is the light of the world; and more specifically, He is our own personal light of salvation. We can live lives of joy and thanksgiving. The Lord describes that light as being armor, something that would protect us from darkness and from Satan himself. As children of God in this world, which is filled with darkness, we are children of light. The light of God is in us; in jars of clay. We have this treasure in jars of clay, this light of God.

Paul describes for us how the lives of believers are intertwined with the life and death of Jesus Himself. He understood that Christ died for his sins. Because of that, he lived his life proclaiming that message of salvation. He lived his life, not just showing Jesus' death, but proclaiming Jesus' life, that Jesus came back from the dead and that Jesus had power over death. Paul, in the joy of his salvation, preached the Word of God; but also by his life revealed the Word of God; as it was his light and it gave him life eternal.

We as jars of clay have the divine treasure that God has given to us. It is the life of Christ. The only way that you and I appreciate the life of Christ is by understanding that first, He had to suffer and die not for Himself, but for us and for all of mankind, for the sins of the world. As He suffered, as He died, He was buried; and He came back to life. He did that not for Himself, but for us. So that light of salvation is through the life of Christ.

Death and life have a close connection even if they are opposite. For the believer they are very closely connected; because without the death of Christ, we would not have life. Without the life of Christ, we would certainly face eternal death. God, Himself sent His Son that He might die that we might live and that the world and believers throughout the world might live. They would live not just a life on earth,

but they might live an eternal life forever in heaven. So this close connection of death, we see in the Sacrament, the Lord's Supper. The Lord says, "This is my body; this is my blood." We are reminded of Christ's death. Yet, we are reminded of Christ's death with a certain sadness because it was our sins that caused Him to die. We also rejoice because it reminds us forgiveness.

We are reminded of His death but also His life and the change that it has made in us; we who are jars of clay, we who are fragile human beings, easily broken. Reminding us as jars of clay, we can't depend on our own power or strength, but on the power of Christ that lives in us. Christ was crucified and raised again from the dead so that we too might live forever.

We have this treasure in jars of clay, a treasure of God's light, a treasure of Jesus' life. In this case it is good that the jars of clay, so to speak, were broken. Not broken so that they were destroyed; but broken so that the light of God would be seen in the world around us and so that the life of Jesus would be declared in our lives.

All this talk about clay jars reminded me of the story of a water bearer in India who had two large pots, each hung on either end of a pole which he carried across his shoulders. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said. The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion, he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up

the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. We're all simply human, weak and fragile, bending and breaking far too easily. But Paul's word to us today is that God's message is far stronger than our weakness. If we allow it, Christ will use our flaws to grace his Father's table. The good news of Christ Jesus is much greater than all the hardships and missteps of this life. So great is this message, in fact, that it makes something wonderful out of something so messed up. Our faith in Jesus Christ does not mean we will never experience adversity, but rather that such adversity will grant us the opportunity to discover and come to trust that by God's grace, light is always brighter than the darkness, life stronger than death, and what resides in our broken bodies is the glory of a resurrection waiting to burst forth. Amen.

Benediction:

In the name of the Father, go in faith in the depths of ancient wisdom, in a salvation wrought before the world began.

In the name of the Son, go in faith and grace, trusting and loving him who touched the leper and who gave the blind sight.

In the name of the Spirit, go in peace, knowing that he has been given to us as a deposit, a promise of the salvation that is now and that is also to come.

*In the name of God, go in the mystery of the Three-in-One and One-in-Three.
Amen.*