

Home Service for June 30, 2024

Welcome and Announcements

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

Are you tossed about on the storms of life? Wait for the Lord . . . more than those who wait for the morning. Wait with hope. Wait with longing. Wait with faith.

Call to Worship:

Come, bring your pain. Draw close to Christ. Reach out to touch Jesus.
Find healing and peace in his love. Amen.

Opening Prayer:

God of freedom and miracles, we wait for your voice and direction this morning. We are so busy with the holiday celebrations and gatherings, yet the words of anguish arise around us. News of tragedy and war blare at us from all directions. Hear our cries, O Lord. Come and comfort and heal our wounds. Open our hearts this day that we might become people who bring peace and hope to those in despair. For we ask these things in the name of the master healer, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

God of Celebrations and Sorrows, we wave the flag this weekend and our hearts beat with pride at the stirring sounds of the bands. Fireworks emblazon the skies, and families gather for celebrations. But in too many places there is little to celebrate. Our spirits ache for people both far and near who suffer and struggle just to have the basic necessities of life, while we live in abundance. Forgive us when our celebration clouds the needs of others. It is important for us to celebrate, but we must never forget that you have given us a ministry and mission to perform here and now. Help us be mindful of the many ways in which we can reach out to others. By our attitudes and our actions, may we be those who would bring hope, comfort, healing, and peace. In Jesus' Name, we pray. AMEN.

Words of Assurance:

The Lord who made the heavens and the earth hears our cries and answers our calls. Hope in the Lord whose steadfast love endures with us forever. AMEN.

Read Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

⁶ I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

⁷ Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.

⁸ He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

Prayers of the People:

What a weekend it is, Lord. It is time to gather and celebrate, time to reflect on the blessings of the freedoms that have been so sorely fought for and won, time to commit ourselves to offering the freedoms we cherish to others. We have gathered here in the midst of the business of the summer season to seek your will, to find peace and directions for our lives. Bless us, O Lord, with wisdom tempered with compassion. Remind us that we have such freedom because others who have gone before have stood for principles of hope. Do not let our pride of country overwhelm the needs that still abound within our walls and our land. Where there is hatred, help us to bring your words of love. Where there are injustices, help us to correct unjust systems and become advocates for the voiceless and powerless. Where there is apathy, empower us to bring the good news of your gracious transforming love. As we have brought before you situations that require help and healing mercies, remind us again that you are with each person and situation, offering your love and mercy. Be with us this day and all our days as we seek to follow you. In Jesus' Name, we pray. 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: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days.

¹⁷ David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

¹⁹ “A gazelle^[a] lies slain on your heights, Israel.

How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ “Tell it not in Gath,

proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,

lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

²¹ “Mountains of Gilboa,

may you have neither dew nor rain,

may no showers fall on your terraced fields.^[b]

For there the shield of the mighty was despised,

the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.

²² “From the blood of the slain,

from the flesh of the mighty,

the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,

the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

²³ Saul and Jonathan—

in life they were loved and admired,

and in death they were not parted.

They were swifter than eagles,

they were stronger than lions.

²⁴ “Daughters of Israel,

weep for Saul,

who clothed you in scarlet and finery,

who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen in battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.
²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
you were very dear to me.
Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women.
²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen!
The weapons of war have perished!”

Read the Epistle Lesson: 2 Corinthians 8:7-15

But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you^[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

¹⁰ And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. ¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. ¹² For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.”^[b]

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 5:21-43

When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. ²⁵ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶ She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. ²⁷ When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in

the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸ because she thought, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.” ²⁹ Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

³⁰ At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ “You see the people crowding against you,” his disciples answered, “and yet you can ask, ‘Who touched me?’ ”

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. ³⁴ He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing^[a] what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha kum!*” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Message

One of our great fears is the fear of the unknown. Very often people get themselves overly excited about the uncertainty of the future. Many worry about the things that might happen or might not happen. There are worries about the weather, the economy, and what tomorrow may bring. Did you also know that some could worry about that which is known? Mere mortals cannot control the wind or the day of their death. But as Christians, we have the very comforting words of Jesus: Do not be afraid; just believe. As believers, by grace, we are able to do that very thing, not fear the unknown or the known because of faith.

Our Gospel starts by telling us that Jesus is again crossing the Sea of Galilee. Just as a reminder, the Western side of the lake was predominantly Jewish

communities, while the Eastern side of the lake was predominantly Gentile communities. This confirms that although Jesus was of the Jewish faith, his ministry and mission in the world reached out beyond the confines of Judaism to embrace all people.

So, Jesus is now on the Western side of the lake, among the Jewish communities. Today's lesson has two stories. Mark makes a point of telling us that the woman suffered from a hemorrhage for twelve years, and that the daughter of Jarius was twelve years of age. Just as there were twelve disciples and twelve tribes of Israel, the mention of this exact number should alert us that these stories were addressed to the faith community, including us today.

The first story was the woman with the chronic hemorrhage. For twelve years this woman has been in misery. She has sought the help of many doctors, only to see her problem persist, even grow worse. And on top of her medical problem, she had spent all of her money in the pursuit of a cure. We could say that she was in desperate need of help. Then she hears that Jesus is in town. She more than likely had heard many stories about how this holy man of God had the ability to heal people. But she was Jewish which meant that she had to live by the Torah. And in Leviticus it clearly states that she would be considered unclean.

This woman not only had a chronic hemorrhage, but she would have not been allowed to be in contact with other people, for it was believed that those who were declared to be unclean could taint those who were pure and righteous. For her to approach Jesus, especially in a crowd of people would have been forbidden. For her to touch Jesus, even his clothing, would have made him impure by their law. But she was desperate. She not only suffered for twelve years from her illness, and spent all of her resources in seeking a cure, but she also suffered from the humiliation of being labeled "unclean." She felt diminished as a person, and helpless to do anything about it. Yet she thought to herself, if I can just sneak into the crowd and touch Jesus' cloak, I can be healed.

And she did it. She ignored the prohibitions of the Torah, entered the crowd, sneaked up behind Jesus and touched his clothes. "Immediately" this woman's hemorrhage stopped, and "immediately" Jesus was aware that the power of his ability to heal had gone out from him. So Jesus asks his disciples, "Who touched my clothes?" And Jesus wouldn't let it go. He kept looking to find the person who had been healed. Finally, the woman herself, realized that Jesus knew what she had done, and "in fear and trembling," she came and fell down before Jesus, confessing her sin. And then we hear those intimate words of forgiveness from Jesus,

“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.”

The other story we have a leader of the synagogue, a person of clean heart, approaches Jesus and begs him to come and heal his twelve year old daughter, who is near death. Jesus agrees, but before he gets to Jarius’s house, word comes that his daughter has died. And when Jesus gets to the house, people are in mourning. So Jesus enters the house, telling the mourners to stop their grieving, for the girl is just sleeping. They laughed at him. He goes to the girl’s room, with the parents and his three closest disciples, and “he took the girl’s hand and said, ‘Talitha cum,’ which means, ‘Little girl, get up!’ “Immediately” the girl got up and began to walk around. And Mark tells us that the people were overcome by amazement.

It is important for us to remember that the law of the Leviticus strictly forbids a rabbi or a holy person from touching the body of a deceased person, other than the immediate family. That Jesus took the dead girl’s hand in his own, was again a defiance of the purity code of Israel. Jesus was again breaking boundaries, of convictions held by his own people. Perhaps the greatest miracle in these two stories is the fact that Jesus reached out to restore the “unclean” and embrace them as his own children. No matter what the reason that we feel we cannot approach God and ask to be restored to a right relationship with him, our Creator, Jesus offers us his hand. He reaches out to us to make us one with him.

Do not be afraid; just believe. By God’s grace we do believe. What is our assurance that death is not to be feared? The first assurance is God’s own promise. The Lord Jesus himself promises eternal life to all those who believe. Jesus’ words of assurance are also backed up his actions of coming back to life. Our human nature and humanness is quite often saddened by death. Even Jesus cried at the death of his friend, Lazarus. Jesus was sad for his friends, Mary and Martha, at their loss. Even in the midst of sadness and sorrow Jesus comforts us with his promises and assurances.

What a comfort, what a blessing and what an encouragement to hear those words of Jesus, our Savior from eternity and for eternity: Do not be afraid; just believe. As Christians, not only do we hear those words, we also believe them. Because of sin there is a certain fear concerning death. Because of God’s love for us there is a greater certainty of eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is most amazing to see that we are saved out of God’s great love that offered up his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place. It is most amazing to know and believe we are saved for

time and eternity purely out of our heavenly Father's divine grace. Do not be afraid; just believe is our daily comfort for eternity! Amen.

Benediction:

God of fireworks and good works, bless us this day as we go from this place. May our celebrations be joyous and memorable, and may our service to others reflect your love and peace. AMEN.