

Home Service for July 21, 2024

Welcome and Announcements

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

*The promise of peace cannot be secured through strength of arms but through self-giving love.*

Call to Worship:

Jesus is our shepherd. Jesus brings us peace. God is greatly to be exalted!  
God's steadfast love endures forever! Jesus is our shepherd. Jesus brings us peace.  
Amen.

Opening Prayer:

Lord, we gather here this morning with lives that are filled with activity and movement. We rush from one thing to another as though we are going to run out of time to accomplish everything. Help us to let go of the hectic times and the stresses and find our rest in you. Relax our spirits and refresh our souls. Remind us that there will always be things to do and places to go, but that we need the rest of spirit that you provide. AMEN.

Prayer of Confession:

Patient God, we wait all year for the summer months when we can rest and relax. Our schedules change from the demands of weekly living, to times which are supposed to be devoted to leisure. But we have redefined leisure to mean a flurry of activities. We need some time to rest, to sit quietly and listen to the beautiful sounds of the world. Forgive us when we are determined to crowd every moment of our lives with activity. Help us to find a quiet center with you where we can just relax and not try to get everything done as though life was some sort of a contest. Give us peace for a little while. Refresh our souls so that we can truly serve you, not out of exhaustion but out of enthusiasm. Be with us this day, for we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

Words of Assurance:

*God's love awaits you. It has been lavished upon you as a gentle summer rain, refreshing your souls, opening your hearts, healing your wounds. Rest in God's eternal love. AMEN.*

Read Psalm 89:20-37

I have found David my servant;  
with my sacred oil I have anointed him.  
21 My hand will sustain him;  
surely my arm will strengthen him.  
22 The enemy will not get the better of him;  
the wicked will not oppress him.  
23 I will crush his foes before him  
and strike down his adversaries.  
24 My faithful love will be with him,  
and through my name his horn<sup>[a]</sup> will be exalted.  
25 I will set his hand over the sea,  
his right hand over the rivers.  
26 He will call out to me, 'You are my Father,  
my God, the Rock my Savior.'  
27 And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,  
the most exalted of the kings of the earth.  
28 I will maintain my love to him forever,  
and my covenant with him will never fail.  
29 I will establish his line forever,  
his throne as long as the heavens endure.  
30 "If his sons forsake my law  
and do not follow my statutes,  
31 if they violate my decrees  
and fail to keep my commands,  
32 I will punish their sin with the rod,  
their iniquity with flogging;  
33 but I will not take my love from him,  
nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.  
34 I will not violate my covenant  
or alter what my lips have uttered.  
35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—  
and I will not lie to David—

<sup>36</sup> that his line will continue forever  
and his throne endure before me like the sun;  
<sup>37</sup> it will be established forever like the moon,  
the faithful witness in the sky.”

Prayers of the People:

*God of peace and hope, we are a nation focused on activity. From every source of media we have opportunities to go and see and do a host of activities. They beckon us to come and have fun, there are activities for all ages. But one of the most necessary activities we neglect is our need for rest. We crowd each day, that has been given by you as a blessing, with busyness. We forget what it is like to sit and listen, to rest, to take time to reflect. Help us to find the quiet moments in which our souls can be made whole again. We know that there will always be much for us to do to serve you in this world, but if we keep up this hectic pace, we will be unable to accomplish anything. We have lifted before you this day names of dear ones for whom we have concern. We feel helpless to lift their burdens and their sorrows. Let us turn these concerns over to you, for you are the Master Healer who restores our souls. Help us to place our trust and our lives in your unending care. For we ask this in Jesus' Name. 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 7:1-14a

After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”

<sup>3</sup>Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

<sup>5</sup>“Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? <sup>6</sup>I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place

with a tent as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup> Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?””

<sup>8</sup> “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders<sup>[a]</sup> over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: <sup>12</sup> When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands.

Read the Epistle Lesson: Ephesians 2:11-22

Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— <sup>12</sup> remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. <sup>17</sup> He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a

holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Read the Gospel Lesson: Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

<sup>32</sup> So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. <sup>33</sup> But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

## Message

In our gospel lesson this morning, the people came to Jesus with the desire for Jesus to rescue them from the frustrations, all the hurts, all the trouble, all the brokenness they were feeling in their lives. They needed someone to bring some needed change into their lives. They needed someone to care for their feelings, their hurts, their inability to handle the challenges of life. They needed someone to care for them.

So when they saw Jesus and they ran to him with all the frustrations, the hurts, the troubles in their lives. They ran to Jesus and in a sense they said we need you! Jesus saw the throngs of people and though he was tired, he had compassion on them. Jesus saw that they needed a shepherd, they needed a guide. They needed him and he had compassion on them.

The most important word in our gospel text is compassion. He had compassion for the people. What does compassion mean? The dictionary says: sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others. And the dictionary says to see the word mercy which means compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one’s power to punish or harm. Jesus had compassion for the people. He had concern for their suffering. He had mercy, forgiveness for the people.

When the people looked into Jesus’ eyes they saw kindness and compassion. When we look to Jesus, we find the same kind of compassion and kindness.

Have you ever watched the movie *The Greatest Story Ever Told*? Well, in the movie we see the young man Jesus standing in the shadow of a doorway in a town in Palestine observing the misery of mankind such as could be found on any street, in any town in that part of the world, in that day or in ours: the lame, the sick, the mentally deranged, the mean, the cruel, all the inhumanity of the world.

He watched it all. For years he watched it, and it rubbed his feelings raw, but he developed no callouses. He kept his sensitivity intact, and that's what made him the perfect vehicle through which the divine compassion could enter the world. He was the perfect example of compassion in action.

As he was growing up, Jesus saw the human condition all around him. He saw sickness, he saw death, he saw poverty, he saw broken relationship, etc. He saw it all. So when his time for ministry began, he had already developed the compassionate heart that was needed. Now he could do something about the human condition. He healed the sick, he gave support to the grieving, he told the people that God loved them as they experienced the human condition. So when the crowds followed him, he did not send them away but he had compassion on them. He saw their brokenness and he extended the compassion of God's Son to them.

And that brings us to the question, if Christ had compassion on the crowds, what are we supposed to do? We all know that Jesus commanded us to love one another. To love means to bear another's burdens. Christians must have strong shoulders to bear the burdens of their fellow Christians. "

We must have strong shoulders to bear another's burden. We need to have compassion like Christ, for we are to be like "little Christs" in the world. While researching for today's sermon I found what I consider the perfect story in which hopefully we can see that kind of compassion in our world.

It was printed about 2000 in the *New York Times* about a little boy who was riding the bus. He sat so close to a woman dressed in a gray suit that everybody assumed he was her son and she his mother, until finally another lady sat down on the same seat with them.

When the little boy put his feet up on the seat and got the other lady's dress dirty, she turned to the woman in the gray suit and said, "Would you please tell your son to put his feet down because he is getting my dress dirty?" The lady in the gray suit pushed the boy away and said, "He's not my son. I've never seen him before in my life."

The second lady looked at the little boy sadly for a moment and then started talking with him. She asked him if he was traveling alone.

"Yes," he said, "I always travel alone. My mommy and daddy are both dead and I live with Aunt Clara. But Aunt Clara thinks that Aunt Mildred ought to take her turn in taking care of me too. So, whenever she gets tired of me, she sends me to Aunt Mildred. I'm going to Aunt Mildred's now."

The woman said, "It must be tough traveling alone."

"Yeah," said the little boy, "it is. But I never get lost. But," he said, "sometimes I do get very lonesome. So whenever I see someone with a kind face I sit close to them, and pretend that I belong to them and that they belong to me."

He continued, "I sure hope that Aunt Mildred is home when I get there, because it looks like it is going to rain and I don't like to be outside when it rains."

The woman reached over and grabbed the boy, hugged him so tight that it almost hurt and wished for a moment that this little boy who wanted so much to belong could belong to her.

*Pause*

When Jesus saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, for Jesus knew that he belonged to them and to everyone who would come and that everyone that day and even today which includes each of us belong to him. Amen

Benediction:

*Beloved, listen! God calls us to worship in our gathering and in our scattering. May the Triune God bless you as you go from this place to answer God's call to worship in everything you do in thought, word, and deed that you may be a blessing of love, hope, and peace to all you meet. Amen.*