



Greeting and Sharing our Joys and Concerns

Prelude: Bread of the World in Mercy Broken Tune: Wayfaring Stranger arr. Gilbert M. Martin

Lighting of the Candles:

October 3, 2021 World Communion Sunday

***Opening Hymn God is Here**

UMH No. 660

1. God is here! As we your people meet to offer praise and prayer, may we find in fuller measure what it is in Christ we share. Here, as in the world around us, all our varied skills and arts wait the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.
2. Here are symbols to remind us of our lifelong need of grace; here are table, font, and pulpit; here the cross has central place. Here in honesty of preaching, here in silence, as in speech, here, in newness and renewal, God the Spirit comes to each.
3. Here our children find a welcome in the Shepherd's flock and fold; here as bread and wine are taken, Christ sustains us, as of old. Here the servants of the Servant seek in worship to explore what it means in daily living to believe and to adore.
4. Lord of all, of church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt keep us faithful to the gospel; help us work your purpose out. Here, in this day's dedication, all we have to give, receive; we, who cannot live without you, we adore you! We believe!

Call to Worship

Pastor: Prove me Lord, and try me!

People: Your steadfast love is before my eyes

Pastor: I will not consort with hypocrites

People: I wash my hands in innocence.

Pastor: I'll sing a song of thanksgiving!

People: And tell of your wondrous deeds!

Pastor: Redeem me, and be gracious:

People: In the Great Congregation I will bless the Lord.

Unison Prayer:

Eternal One, whose thoughts and ways are not ours,

You alone are God, awesome, holy, and most high.

School us in the ways of faith and wisdom,

that we, like Job,

may learn to truly see and hear,

and in humility find blessing. Amen.

OT Reading Job 1: 1; 2: 1-10

NT Reading Hebrews 1: 1-4; 2: 5-12

***Hymn: For the Bread Which You Have Broken**

UMH No. 614

1. For the bread which you have broken, for the wine which you have poured, for the words which you have spoken, now we give you thanks, O Lord.
2. By this pledge that you do love us, by your gift of peace restored, by your call to heaven above us, hallow all our lives, O Lord.
3. With our sainted ones in glory seated at the heavenly board, may the church that's waiting for you keep love's tie unbroken, Lord.
4. In your service, Lord, defend us, in our hearts keep watch and ward; in the world where you have sent us, let your kingdom come, O Lord.

Gospel Reading: Mark 10: 2-16

Pastor: The word of God for the people of God.

People: Thanks be to God!

Choral Anthem

Message: Don't feel guilty about that

I am really tempted to do a sermon on Job, because we lightly mentioned Job last week. I also talked a little bit about satan last week, and maybe all you can remember is my

reference to O Brother Where Art Thou-- but I really am interested in satan as a character in Job. I won't go too far into this book, but this is widely believed as a nonfactual story: even if it has "truth", it's not presumed to actually have happened. This book, like the book of Esther, is trying to demonstrate God's power. But it also wants to demonstrate God's power when people have faith in God.

Remember here, that satan is a tempter. He is a character that God is conversing with. He is not some form of 'giant anomaly' that is arm wrestling Jesus over the fate of the world (believe it or not, I've seen artwork portraying this): satan is a creature that has specific uses. Our mission is always to be untempted by these evil. But, I'll remind us again, of the banality of evil.

We as creatures are so easily swayed to do really immoral things. But I say this not to scare us, I say this just to remind us to be really self aware of the things that we are asked to do, and be aware of the things we get a weird feeling while doing.

Also, I think that sin is very complex. Sometimes... I wonder if all sin is evil. I definitely don't think it is mindfully evil all the time.

I think of all the nuances of all the things that we know and do in our daily life, and how unavoidable it is to add to the suffering of other beings (often we don't even know that we're doing so!)

This week I've been thinking a lot about chocolate, and the labor that goes into making chocolate. I think a lot about fast food and the unfair labor that it supports. I think a lot about our meat consumption, and diamond mining. It's hard to throw a rock without hitting some form of injustice hidden in plain sight.

Those are the *external* sins that we don't often see; our daily lives often include *internal* sins that we worry about. Maybe it's just me, but sometimes I have an internal dialog that can be awfully belittling. Sometimes my internal dialog can sound kind of judgmental. Often, I have to try to address why I think the thoughts that I think, and be able to tailor them, or support them. I think that's why education is so important, because it helps us affirm or rearrange how we address our internal dialogue.

And our internal dialog goes hand-in-hand with justice or injustice that we see in the world. A lot of how we think, often about money, leads to how we behave in the world. How we see other people. How we empathize.

I think Jesus was saying that children have more straightforward emotions and responses than adults do. Part of that is because some of those things are not developed yet. But sometimes we have to be somewhat innocent and maybe a touch pure to be able to live in a healthy way in such a difficult world.

We can't think and scheme and buy our way into an eternal life. We can't even try for eternal life *because* it is eternal life. Eternal life is all about the relationship that we have with the Being that made us and loves us. While our love can get maligned, God's love is never maligned.

Speaking of broken love, the Mark reading is something that I'm going to address today.

Have you been in a situation where somebody is following the letter of the law but not the spirit? I'm thinking of a case where somebody is bringing their longboard into a park and they skate past a sign that says no skateboarding. Someone, perhaps yourself, addresses this person, "Hey no skateboards in the park! be careful." And the person says to you, "this isn't a skateboard, it's a longboard!"

Or maybe you were in church with your child, and your child starts to racewalk down the hallway after another child. You say "no running!" and the child says "I'm not running, I'm just walking fast!"

These are ways of getting around the rules and still getting what one wants without having to feel too guilty about what you're doing.

I wonder if this is sort of what's happening in the Mark reading. The Pharisees are trying to justify divorce in some sense, while testing Jesus on his opinion, but also testing the boundaries of this social situation. Jesus tells them that divorce is *sort of breaking the rule*. It's a legal way of being an exception to the law.

Jesus has some pretty harsh words about divorce and the following paragraph. I want to say something here: not all divorce is included in this scenario. I think Jesus is talking about a scenario where a person just gets annoyed/bored of their husband, wife, partner, and moves off to be with another person. Frivolously divorcing is as good as adultery is what I believe Jesus to be saying. Sin has so deeply entered the world, that many of the scenarios where people get divorced now tend to come out of a necessity, rather than a frivolous desire. That being said, divorce rates *are* really high in America, and that probably needs to be further examined by professionals.

You do not have to feel guilty over a divorce that was necessary. Even if it feels like a sin, it's a sin that cannot really be avoided because of the world that we live in. I think Jesus really wants us to take seriously what marriage is, and the social role that it plays in a society. He says this is the linking of a man and a woman. I think in today's world this would no longer just be limited to male and female.

But now you become one flesh. Jesus says that this is something that God has put together.

Ultimately, Jesus is saying we need to take our relationships very seriously. While we as protestants don't consider marriage a sacrament, it is still something that the church does, and the church celebrates. We still have litanies for marriage.

To broaden the scope, people need to be seen as creatures made by God, and not just means to an end. And in a world where we pay each other for one another's time, it can be really tempting to see other people as just means to an end. It can be really tempting to not see other people as people. Tempting to be fearful, to be anxious, to be unnecessarily aggressive towards others.

Perhaps we can cite rules as to why it's OK for our behavior to be a certain way, or we can make up hypothetical situations on how we are justified, but, at the end of the day, we realize whose we are. We recognize that sin can cause a whole host of issues, and can threaten one's very life. But that is why we are to be **wise** and innocent.

To be able to develop deeper relationships, and to bring in more people into our relationships, we need to take risks. We don't need to be dangerous about it, but sometimes our risks might look less financially stable than we would like.

I was told by a coach this week that sometimes we have to take 10 different risks of sorts to try different ministries, only to have one stick. But it's the *people* brought in by that one ministry that make all of it worthwhile.

Bear in mind that we are broken people. Bear in mind that we will make mistakes without even realizing it, bear in mind that we will hurt other people without even realizing it. We are still told that we are loved and will be guided. We are still children of God, even in our suffering and in our sin. We are still siblings of Christ, the great teacher.

"It is fitting that God, from whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the Pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. For the one who sanctifies and the ones who are sanctified all have one father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them siblings, saying 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you'."

Offering and Doxology

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Holy Communion

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The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor – The Lord be with you

Congregation – And also with you.

Pastor – Lift up your hearts.

Congregation – We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor – Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Congregation – It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing, Always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

And so, With your people on earth And all the company of heaven We praise our name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, And made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

On the night to which he gave himself up for us he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said; "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, In remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Congregation – Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.

Congregation – Amen

Pastoral Prayer:

Pastor: In peace, we pray to you, Lord God. For all people in their daily life and work;

People: For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

Pastor: For this community, the nation, and the world;

People: For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.

Pastor: For the just and proper use of your creation;

People: For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

Pastor: For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

People: For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

Pastor: For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

People: For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

Pastor: For Bishop Webb, DS Weeden, all bishops and ministers;

People: For all who serve God in his Church.

Pastor: For the special needs and concerns of this congregation. **silence for personal prayers** Hear us, Lord;

People: For your mercy is great.

Pastor: We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life. **silence for personal prayers** We will exalt you, O God our King;

People: And praise your Name for ever and ever.

Pastor: We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom. **silence for personal prayers** Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

People: Who put their trust in you.

The 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 power and the glory forever. Amen

Closing Hymn: Help Us Accept Each Other

UMH No. 560

1. Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us; teach us a sister, brother, each person to embrace. Be present, Lord, among us, and bring us to believe we are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.
2. Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life we struggle to be human and search for hope and faith. Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some, to love them as we find them, or as they may become.

3. Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved in living situations to do the truth in love; to practice your acceptance, until we know by heart the table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.
4. Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need, who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread, we need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on; renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us, Make us one!

Announcements:

We are giving a gift to the Obstetrics unit at Canton-Potsdam Hospital!

Benediction: Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.—Hebrews 13:20–21

Postlude: Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee by Ludwig van Beethoven, incorporating Rondeau by Jean-Joseph Mouret, arr. by Robert Law

Birthdays

Matt McKinley	Oct. 7
Dawn Sloan	Oct. 7