



Date 10-10-21 20th Sunday After Pentecost

Greeting and Sharing our Joys and Concerns

Prelude: All the Way My Savior Leads Me - Tune by Robert Lowry, arr. Gilbert M. Martin

Lighting of the Candles: **Please enjoy a moment of silence and inner reflection as we quietly prepare ourselves for worship**

***Opening Hymn O Young and Fearless Prophet**

UMH No. 444

1. O young and fearless Prophet of ancient Galilee, thy life is still a summons to serve humanity; to make our thoughts and actions less prone to please the crowd, to stand with humble courage for truth with hearts uncowed.
2. We marvel at the purpose that held thee to thy course while ever on the hilltop before thee loomed the cross; thy steadfast face set forward where love and duty shone, while we betray so quickly and leave thee there alone.
3. O help us stand unswerving against war's bloody way, where hate and lust and falsehood hold back Christ's holy sway; forbid false love of country that blinds us to his call, who lifts above the nations the unity of all.
4. Stir up in us a protest against our greed for wealth, while others starve and hunger and plead for work and health; where homes with little children cry out for lack of bread, who live their years sore burdened beneath a gloomy dread.
5. O young and fearless Prophet, we need thy presence here, amid our pride and glory to see thy face appear; once more to hear thy challenge above our noisy day, again to lead us forward along God's holy way.

Call to Worship: Based on Psalm 22

Pastor: My God, My God,

People: Why have you forsaken me?

Pastor: Why are you far from me?

People: In you our ancestors trusted,

Pastor: And you delivered them.

People: You kept me safe from my birth,

Pastor: So do not be far from me.

People: Do not be far from me.

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 23: 1-9, 16-17

NT Reading Hebrews 4: 12-16

***Hymn: Take My Life, and Let It Be**

UMH No. 399

1. Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee. Take my moments and my days; let them flow in ceaseless praise. Take my hands, and let them move at the impulse of thy love. Take my feet, and let them be swift and beautiful for thee.
2. Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King. Take my lips, and let them be filled with messages from thee. Take my silver and my gold; not a mite would I withhold. Take my intellect, and just every power as thou shalt choose.
3. Take my will and make it thine; it shall be no longer mine. Take my heart, it is thine own, it shall be thy royal throne. Take my love, my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store. Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

Gospel Reading: Mark 10:17-31

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

People: Thanks be to God!

Choral Anthem

Message: Eternal Life

At this point, 3 months into being here, I'm beginning to think that I'm starting every sermon with "oh boy, this passage is difficult." I think this just means that our holy book is really complex. And it's difficult to interpret. And perhaps this is a good thing, because it shows us that we have so much to learn throughout our entire life. Paradoxically, this holy book really has broad simplistic meanings. Of the 10 commandments, none of them are very complex. They have to do with treating other people well.

But how many of us can say confidently that we haven't broken one of the 10 commandments? If you can, good for you! Perhaps you can relate with Job. Continue to help teach other people how to live like you are living. And thank God there's grace for all, because we need it.

The Mark passage I read about 7 times. Perhaps more. This is another one of those infamous passages that makes modern people uncomfortable. Well the Bible can be quite comforting, it seems to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. Conveniently, that's how this Mark passage ends. "But many who are 1st will be last and the last will be 1st."

That's really such an odd thought. Though I've grown up hearing that for years, it still is counter to how we consider fairness. I know I have done sermons on fairness before, but think about how much we like fairness. If one grandchild gets 2 carrots the other grandchild gets 2 carrots. It might not matter that one is 12 and the other is 5. So fairness is a funny thing.

Let's dive into the Mark passage more. I remember saying last week something about how we shouldn't focus on eternal life. We shouldn't fixate on the reward of eternal life just because we want it, like we might want a new purse or a new pair of shoes.

Perhaps a fear of death makes us long for an eternal life; but longing for eternal life just so we can avoid our fear is really not the same as loving the creator.

Following the 10 commandments so you can gain something is not quite the same as following the 10 commandments because you love the One who wants you to live well.

So when we look at the context of this Mark passage, what do you notice about the rich man? I noticed that he runs before Christ, calls him "good" teacher, and asks what one can do to get eternal life.

Christ really is an intense character in the New Testament. I honestly would be afraid to go before him and talk to him. Especially after seeing what he says to the rich man, namely: "don't use that title with me, sir. And you already know the answer to that question."

The man honestly says that he's done those things, following the commandments for years, and starts getting his hopes up.

Christ sees that there is potential- innocence and wisdom. As if seeing an eager child, Christ smiles, and says "well you overlooked one thing-- you have to give up all the riches you have." This is not life advice for all of us-- it's not saying you can only get into heaven if you're poor.

I am under the persuasion that this is about recognizing one's hidden sins in their own life. The commentary I was reading said that this man may have gained riches from a problematic job: he may have been unintentionally part of a system that robs the poor. So to be able to live a true life, he needs to not gain money from that source.

But fear of the unknown is seemingly greater than love of the unknown, and the man goes away not understanding what he's losing out on.

Christ does not allay fears. He looks to his disciples and says it's really hard for rich people to get to heaven. Christ also says, it's impossible for mortals to save themselves. Only God can save them.

So the rich man was not necessarily losing out on eternal life, but there is no way for him to save himself by just being a good person. If he does not come to grips with his own sins, and is afraid to lose the one thing that he has, then he's lost out on an opportunity to become one of the close disciples-- to become as close as humanly possible to Christ while Christ was on Earth. Ironically, he's losing a closer taste of what eternal life, the thing he sought, would be like.

Christ's disciples then get nervous, and ask "well we're doing a good job aren't we? We left our families, and we left a lot of stuff behind, so we're OK, right?"

Christ's response is kind of facetious. Christ says "well, no one who has given up a bunch of stuff that hasn't received a bunch of stuff back-- of course with persecutions too. Oh, and of course with giving up all that stuff comes eternal life."

But then comes the most important point... "many who are 1st will be last and the last will be 1st."

It's not about what we try to do for the sake of eternal life, what we try to do for gaining more on this Earth, what we try to do to gain money (even if we are good, and give away some of it to people who are in need).

What life is about is being able to be reconnected with the creator. To be able to find true life by valuing God, your neighbor, and yourself. Valuing and enjoying creation. By being able to treat one another well, because you recognize the inherent value in others. That's why it's so hard for people who have *so many things* to enter the kingdom of God. Matthew 6 puts it as we store up treasures "where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal". Eternal life it's not something to be gained like something on Earth is to be gained.

The more things we have, the more creature comforts, the more tempting it is to continue to lose sight of what really matters. This is not a plea to become a minimalist, but I do think that that can be a respectful way of living. This is just a plea to be mindful of how much we use the terminology of "gaining" for our own sake.

Christ says again and again that God's way of seeing things is a divine reversal. The things that we may value, are not always the things that God values. But we're told again and again the things that God values. Our bibles are filled with this.

We're not set off to sail without a compass. While temptations and fear may make our compasses pull in different directions, it's all about finding where due North is, and following that.

So my friends, there is so much that we can *give up* in the name of Christ. But what we *find* is our true life, and our true meaning. And that is so much greater than anything we could ever imagine.

Offering and Doxology

UMH No. 94

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 Mark Webb, DS Mike Weeden, all bishops and other 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: Let Me Walk With Thee**

UMH No. 430

1. O Master, let me walk with thee in lowly paths of service free; tell me thy secret; help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
2. Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear, winning word of love; teach me the wayward feet to stay, and guide them in the homeward way.
3. Teach me thy patience; still with thee in closer, dearer company, in work that keeps faith sweet and strong, in trust that triumphs over wrong;
4. In hope the sends a shining ray far down the future's broadening way, in peace the only thou canst give, with thee, O Master, let me live.

Announcements:

- Can you help us count the offering? Looking for a volunteer after each service to assist with counting.
- Bible Study on Google Meets starts this Tuesday night (October 12), 5:30 pm!

Benediction: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. - 2 Cor. 13:14

Postlude: Prelude in F Major Johann Sebastian Bach

Birthdays

October 16 - John Wever

Upcoming Meetings/Studies

Tuesday October 12, 10am - Finance - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday October 12, 1:30pm - Mission Team - Fellowship Hall

Tuesday October 12, 5:30pm - Bible Study - Ecclesiastes - Google Meet

Saturday October 16, 1:30pm - CheeryOs

Greeters/Ushers

October 10: Tom Ortmeyer and Sue & John Loope

October 17: Trish Lewis and Christa Carroll

Weekly Offering:

\$3,768: October 3rd offering

\$1,700.00: need each week

Church office hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9am - 11pm

Pastor Taylor's Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm, Thursdays 10am-2pm.

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