



Date: November 7th, 2021

Greeting and Sharing our Joys and Concerns

**Prelude: Awake, Awake to Love and Work. Melody: "Morning Song". Wilbur Held**

**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 127

Pastor: Unless the Lord builds the house,

**People: those who build it labor in vain.**

Pastor: Unless the Lord guards the city,

**People: the guard keeps watch in vain.**

Pastor: In vain we toil anxiously, with little rest,

**People: for the Lord gives sleep to the beloved.**

Pastor: Happy are those with many trustworthy friends and family,

**People: For the Lord will not see them put to shame.**

**Unison Prayer: Providing God, you journeyed with Ruth and comforted Hannah when their lives were burdened by grief. Grant us faith to believe you will provide a future where we see none, that bitterness may turn to joy and barrenness may bear life. Amen.**

OT Reading Ruth 3: 1-5; 4:13-17

NT Reading Hebrews 9: 24-28

**\*Hymn: I Come with Joy.**

**UMH No. 617**

1. I come with joy to meet my Lord, forgiven, loved and free, in awe and wonder to recall his life laid down for me, his life laid down for me.
2. I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed, the new community of love in Christ's communion bread, in Christ's communion bread.
3. As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends. The love that made us makes us one, and strangers now are friends, and strangers now are friends.
4. And thus with joy we meet our Lord. His presence, always near, is in such friendship better known; we see and praise him here, we see and praise him here.
5. Together met, together bound, we'll go our different ways, and as his people in the world, we'll live and speak his praise, we'll live and speak his praise.

Gospel Reading: Mark 12: 38-44

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

**People: Thanks be to God!**

**Choral Anthem**

## Message: Trusting in Appearances

Last week we heard praise for the scribe. It was the scribe who asked a trick question, and acknowledged a great response. The scribe who was told by Jesus "you were not far off from the kingdom of God."

Perhaps last week you thought "maybe the scribes are OK. But it's more the Pharisees and Sadducees to watch out for."

You've heard this kind of thinking at family dinners, maybe at Thanksgiving, often centering round political parties. "Well it's not this party you have to look out for, it's really that party." "It's not this economic policy to be wary of, it's really that one."

But Jesus uproots this notion that the scribes might be the secret heroes of the story. Just a couple sentences later, Jesus says "beware of the scribes, who walk around in long robes... They devour widow's houses. And for the sake of appearance they say long prayers."

Well. So much for much for all scribes being close to the kingdom of God.

It's almost as if Christianity is a choice by an individual, and not found along party lines. Jesus is saying essentially, your priest can't give you faith, only can they help nourish your faith. And beware of those who show off how strong their faith is. For it's not likely what it seems.

There's a saying I was thinking of while reading this passage, and it's "you should never meet your heroes." I remember being in college when I heard that phrase for the 1st time, and found out within a week about the affair that Karl Barth was having. This profound Christian writer, I've read a number of his works. Helping inform a Christian counter-movement to the Nazis during World War II ... but still falling prey to this sin.

I remember finding out about Martin Luther King Jr's affair, in high school. Constantly, our news is filled with politicians and leaders caught up in morally questionable behavior. Even with me just talking about this, I'm sure you can think of heroes that broke your heart.

I was glad to rejoice with the scribe last week, but I am painfully aware that sometimes a praise of somebody is *not a praise of their position*, but a praise of their personal character.

Just because you can trust your hairdresser, it doesn't mean you can trust all hairdressers to cut your hair the way you like it.

You may look at the passage with Jesus saying "to beware of the scribes". And you can say "oh Jesus, not all scribes are bad. Last week you met a really good scribe."

But Jesus is noticing a trend. This position tends to attract people who use it in bad faith. Either there's not enough training, or the people's hearts are not in the right place, or this position is open to charismatic people who may not have the best morals.

And Jesus was not going to the scribes and telling them this to their face. He knows that they know about their sins. He also has previously called authority hypocrites. Jesus was teaching this to his disciples. Jesus was essentially telling his people "be careful you aren't idolizing bad faith." It may

look like a good deal on Earth, but Jesus warns they will receive greater condemnation for this an authentic way of being.

I think people are still prone to this period. I can't tell you how many times I've been told that politicians or religious leaders are acceptare exceptionally Christian people, despite all of the bad morals that are often seen in their behavior. As methodists, to enter the ministry, we need to answer a series of questions about our morality. And we're held to very high standards. This doesn't necessarily mean that all of us follow this, and oftentimes we do mess up. But we are warned of the gravity of these situations.

I'm not sure how we can judge somebody we don't know well, and believe that they are an exceptional Christian person. I encourage you to do your own research, and not just all from the same vein of thought, but diverse research before you come to conclusions about politicians or religious leaders. Try not to use the phrase "they are such a Christian leader." I'm not convinced we know exactly how Christ would lead a nation or a physical church.

This is not to say "don't trust your bosses.", it is to say that blind trust is problematic.

We can easily be fooled by the appearances of a good haircut and a nice fitting suit, and overlook the sins in plain sight. We can easily be fooled by good sentiments, and miss that good actions are not the same as this good speech.

It's easy to assume people are close fisted, when we aren't aware of all the other blessings they are giving outside of this building. We are told to pray in secret. Do not make a big show of how and when we pray. Now, if you say "Hattie, your pastoral prayers are getting kind of long..." That's because I'm pouring my heart out.

To praise successfully, I really think you have to mean what you say. Sometimes a long prayer is necessary, but a long showy prayer that is not authentic is a problem.

We are told to hold others accountable.. If you notice that somebody is falling into sin, while confrontation is terribly uncomfortable, it is better to confront what you've noticed than to sit quietly. If you are doubting the authenticity and benefit of someone's actions, bring it up with the person, or a group of people who can help do something about it. Gossiping will not get us far.

Trust in God can get you further than the trust in oneself. As someone who likes a lot of control over her schedule, I tend to get very scheduled. I wonder if I miss out on opportunities from God because of the tight schedule that I follow.

But sometimes running on a schedule is the most respectful . To make sure that you are able to get done what you've promised to get done. Empty promises won't get us far.

So ultimately, you have to know in yourself what is acceptable behavior, and what's being done for show. What is being done authentically, and what is being done as a power move.

True Faith is something that someone decides for themselves. Regardless of job, or social status, or background. Sure, while jobs or social statuses, or backgrounds may be more or less likely *statistically* to fall into certain patterns, faith is about a person. Faith is about a relationship.

May we be conscious of our assumptions, and generous with those who we don't understand. Look for faith, shown not in appearances, but in diverse circumstances. Because the kingdom of God is not far off from that.

**Offering and Doxology**

**UMH No. 94**

**Holy Communion**

**UMH No. 12**

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 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**

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 use 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.

**Announcements:**

1. "Celebrating our Blessings, Sharing our Gifts" Sunday November 14th - Sharon
2. Our Charge Conference is scheduled for Sunday Nov. 21st at 4pm

Benediction: The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.—Numbers 6:24–26

**Postlude: Varied Harmonization of "The Ash Grove". Paul R. Otte**

Birthdays

Tom Ortmeyer - November 10

Grace Mattimore - November 12

Worship Participants

Greeters/Ushers:

November 7: Robin Howard and Kathy Demo

November 14: Kathy Bracy and Doug & Jean Theobald

Readers:

November 7: Sam Smith

Weekly Offering:

\$1,765.00 offering for Sunday October 31, 2021

\$1,700.00: need each week

Church office hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am - 11pm  
Pastor Taylor's Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm, Thursdays 10am-2pm.  
email: [info@potsdamumc.org](mailto:info@potsdamumc.org) ♦ Website: [www.potsdamumc.org](http://www.potsdamumc.org)  
Pastor Taylor: [pastortaylor@potsdamumc.org](mailto:pastortaylor@potsdamumc.org)  
Potsdam United Methodist Church, 26 Main Street, Potsdam NY 13676, 315-265-7474