

Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia

Sunday, June 26th, 2016

The liturgist should retrieve the supply preacher's honorarium check from the liturgist's box in the office. The liturgist should locate the guest preacher, Mr. Chuck Morgan, give him his honorarium and answer any questions he might have. At 10:45am, the liturgist and preacher will enter and take their seats. The liturgist will then step to the lectern, welcome everyone, and make announcements....

The Liturgist will then ask...

"Are there any other announcements or concerns of the church that need to be made known at this time?..... Thank you."

The liturgist will take a seat.

PRELUDE "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise" - Michael Burkhardt Dr. Elizabeth Davis

After the prelude, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

"Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 119 and printed in our bulletins?"

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 119)

Your words are sweeter to my taste than honey to my mouth!

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord. Teach me your ordinances.

You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in your word.

Uphold me according to your promise, that I may live, and let me not be put to shame in my hope.

Deal with your servant according to your steadfast love, and teach me your statutes.

Give understanding to your servant, so that I may know your decrees.

The unfolding of your words gives light and imparts understanding to the simple.

Make your face shine upon your servant, & teach me your statutes.

I hope for your salvation, O Lord. I fulfill your commandments.

Let my cry come before you, O Lord; give me understanding according to your word.

Let my supplication come before you; deliver me according to your promise.

My lips will pour forth praise, because you teach me your statutes.

I will sing of your promises, for all your commandments are right.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... God of the Ages, there is a sweetness to your golden words handed down from generation to generation across the millennia through the holy scriptures. We ask You, Our Father, to enlighten every soul here, and to sweeten all our words, deeds, and prayers. Grant that we may receive it gladly and respond to it in joyful obedience. Where our desires falter, we ask for courage. Where our wills are weak, we ask for strength. Where our motives are impure, purge us from all evil. Speak to us, we pray, the word that we most need to hear, for you alone know our hearts. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, "God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand", hymn number 288 in our Hymnals..

The liturgist should step back from the microphone for the hymn.

***HYMN OF PRAISE "God of the Ages, Whose Almighty Hand" The Hymnal #288**

After the hymn, the liturgist will step into the pulpit and say...

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Let us come before God with contrite and open hearts, striving to be honest in admitting our shortcomings and open to receiving forgiveness so that we might let go and move on. In trust and confidence let us go to the Lover of our souls to confess our sin as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins, pausing at its end for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Merciful Savior, we confess that we have been ungrateful recipients of the vast treasure that is

your holy scripture. We have heard your word but not obeyed it, believed the "right" things but not lived them; claimed to know you, but not followed the life you modeled. You call us to trust, but we fail to loosen our grip of control. You invite us to abide, but we chase our own pursuits. You give the Sabbath for our rest, but we ignore it. Forgive us and restore our abandoned wisdom. Lead us to follow your word that we may live in your joy and peace continually. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION (Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.)

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

He who stilled the sea with a word is the same Lord that defeated sin and death on the cross. It is **HIS** word promises that all who confess and repent shall be forgiven and made new. Friends believe the Good News!

In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

*GLORIA PATRI

The Hymnal #579

Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

God has reconciled us to himself through the gift of his son, our Lord Jesus. May we also be reconciled to one another and share the peace of Christ. The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.

After a few moments, liturgist will step into the lectern and say...

"Please be seated. At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a Word from the Lord brought to them by Ann Rouch."

The preacher will take a seat.

CHILDREN'S SERMON (All Singing)

Ann Rouch

Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;

Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;

Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.

As the children leave the front, the liturgist will step to the lectern & say,

Once more, let all those who are able, stand and join in singing our the first three verses of our second hymn, "How Firm a Foundation", #361 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF PREPARATION

"How Firm a Foundation"

The Hymnal #361

After the hymn, the Liturgist will return to the lectern and say,

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Please be seated. ... We who have gathered here, have done so at God's gracious invitation so that we may hear again the proclamation of his word offering hope, strength, and love to all. Therefore, let us give generously so that His life giving Word may continue to go forth as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings.

The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.

Offertory

"Children of the Heavenly Father" - Michael Burkhardt

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

*Doxology

The Hymnal #592

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;

Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, & Holy Ghost. Amen.

After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...

Our Father, let it be that we have given not because we feel we should, or in expectation of recognition or a tax deduction, but simply because we need to share. Let it be that we give because we have a yearning to reclaim this world as **your** world. Accept and bless these gifts as well as those who bring them that your kingdom may come. In the name of Jesus Christ, your Word Incarnate, we pray. Amen.

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

"The Apostle's Creed"

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using the traditional words of the

Apostles' Creed printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen.

Invite the congregation to... "Be seated," and then take a seat.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Be Thou My Vision"

Dr. David DeSeguirant, tenor

After the soloist finishes, the Liturgist will return to the lectern & say...

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson for this morning is taken from Deuteronomy, the eighteenth chapter, beginning with the twentieth verse. I will be reading from the New International Version, but you are invited to follow along on page #168 in your pew bibles.

Listen now for the word of God...

"But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed."

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with his family and friends in the congregation.

When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...

Our second reading this morning is taken from Paul's second letter to Timothy, the fourth chapter, beginning with the first verse. I will be reading the New International Version, but I encourage you to follow along in your pew bibles. You can find the passage in them on page #1039.

Listen once more for the word of God...

"... I give you this charge:

"Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage— with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.

Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry."

Leader: ...This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

"Conform to the Word, Not to the World"

Dr. Pierre Boumtje

Let us pray:

Eternal God, Your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love. Give us strength to follow on the path you set before us; Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Amen!

It is always a humbling honor to come to this pulpit, and I am very grateful for the privilege. We live in a rapidly changing world, the 21st century society and culture. In this new society and culture, individuals, institutions, and communities face new challenges and must adjust to social demands of this time to survive and stay relevant. Charles Darwin, a famous scientist would say: "*It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change*".

Most responses to these new social and cultural demands have consisted of adopting new attitudes, new norms, new values, new behavior, new laws, new policies, *etc* ... to better reflect what we generally perceive as values of inclusion, diversity, fairness, and opportunity for all.

You may be familiar with the saying that: "***Life is like a box of chocolates*** (can you finish it for me?) ... *you never know what you are getting.*" Well, this past spring, I attended a workshop in Little Rock and one speaker described today's life in the following terms: "*Today's life is more like a vending machine, you put some change in it, and you get exactly what you want*". The focus here is on "getting what I want", satisfying my personal desires, as long as I put in some change. That's our 21st Century approach to all aspects of life.

We tend to adjust everything to suit our personal desires, including matters of faith. One of the problems in today's culture is that too many of us come to Scripture asking the wrong question. We come asking, "What does this passage mean to **me**?" or "What does this passage mean to this social group or that social group? Everyone trying to put some adjustments in Scripture if necessary, in order to get exactly what we want.

Different denominations in the Christian community have been reshaping their message and their doctrines to stay relevant in today's culture, trying to accommodate demands from different social groups. The danger is when these new doctrines or reshaped messages lose consistency with the Word of God just for the sake of accommodating social demands.

The proper question to ask when we approach the scripture is not what this passage mean to me. It is: What did **God** mean by this passage? He is the author of the Scripture and only he can tell us what He meant in every passage.

This confusion about the question is a problem because we tend to confuse multiple meanings with multiple applications.

For example, the Bible says, "***Thou shalt not steal***". That only has one meaning, but it has a multiple applications. ***Thou shalt not steal*** is not just about rubbing a bank, it means that I will give 100% of my time and talents to my employer while I am at work. To do less is to steal from my employer. I must not fudge or lie on my tax returns to increase my refund because to do so is to steal from my state, or my country. -- one meaning with a multitude of applications.

The essence of the message this morning is that today, in an attempt to conform to new social demands, some church institutions dilute the truth or end up departing from the truth. Today's culture seems to have started dictating to the church what is right and what is wrong. Paul saw this coming, he did warn Timothy about it and he is warning us today as well.

What is in there for me? That's the question we like to ask.

One very familiar story in the Bible relates to Israel's rejection of the form of government God had chosen for them. The story is recorded in 1 Samuel chapter 8. For some 300+ years God had placed judges over Israel, but the time came when they wanted to change, to replace God's plan with their own, and the only reason was that they wanted conformity with the world around them. They refused to hear the warnings given by Samuel because their desire was to be like other nations. "***Then we will be like all the other nations***", they said. That was a social demand of their time. They wanted their way over God's way.

What is in there for me is the question we keep asking.

Closer to us, I read a story about Franklin Roosevelt Jr. and I was told it is a true story. The story says that at one time Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., was sick with a staff infection of the throat. A new medicine called **sulpha-nil-amide** was tried with amazing success.

The publicity of the case caused the drug to be in great demand.

What is in there for me? Some patients are not comfortable with swallowing pills. To accommodate patients who did not like the tablet form of the drug, a pharmaceutical company in Tennessee conceived the idea of preparing the drug in a liquid form. They dissolved it in **diethylamide glycol** which by itself was known to be very safe.

Unfortunately, the liquid form of the drug proved to be very costly and fatal. Sixty one patients died after taking it. A harmless lifesaving drug in one form became a poison in another form. It was not something that was taken away that made the drug deadly, but something that was added to accommodate those who prefer liquid form to tablets.

We all know that many types of medicine come in different forms to fit different tastes and preferences. If you shop Walmart over the counter medicines like I do, you have certainly noticed that for every brand, you have a cheaper “*Equate*” version. I personally look first for “*equate*” versions because they are cheap. Low cost is what is there for me. I have seen cough medicine with all kinds of tastes, orange taste, blue berries taste, strawberry taste, or grape taste. Everyone gets their preferred taste of the same medicine.

In theory, all versions of the same medicine have the same active ingredient, that’s the chemical substance that actually heals. Any other substance is just part of the supporting materials.

But most pharmacists will tell you the truth that all generic brands of the same medicine do not always work the same. Some of the so-called supporting materials may actually delay, impede, or block the release of the active ingredient. In worse cases, added substances may produce an unintended or even a fatal result. That’s probably what happened with the liquid form of the medicine that healed Franklin Roosevelt.

It is not always wise to change the form of an important drug to fit our own tastes, and our desires. It might just be wise to accept to swallow the original proven pill without changing anything, no matter how uncomfortable that seems to be.

The Word of God is such a medicine that does not need adjustments for personal tastes or conformity with social demands.

The Word of God is a standard, like a meter stick. It is what we come back to measure our words and actions to see if they accurately reflect the truth of God.

Paul clearly warns about that in his charge to Timothy: “***For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.***” Maybe that time has already come in some Christian denominations, including ours. What are your ears itching to hear today? The sacred unchanging truth or the comfort of a changing culture?

The first thing to recognize when facing changes along with new social demands is that God Himself NEVER changes. This is the bedrock of our faith, peace, security, and confidence when facing the past, present, and future. And He said His Word doesn’t change either. Matthew 24:35 confirms that “***Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away***”. This is the anchor for dealing with all changes because He is the one thing that can be counted on to NOT change!

The Word of God shouldn’t be subject to dilution of any sort, for conformity with cultural trends of our time. Paul urges the church to stand on the truth, the truth of God’s Word. In the face of cultural changes and new social demands, we must come to grips with the Truth, and stop desiring OUR own versions of the truth. We need to be influencing society, not the other way around. As Chesterton would say, “*We do not want a church that will move with the world. We want a church that will move the world.*” -- G.K. Chesterton, *The New Witness. Christianity Today, Vol. 30 no. 8.*

The Word of God is not a vending machine from which you get what you want provided you put in some change.

For us Christians, the Word of God should be like a clean and clear mirror. We face it. If you don’t like what we see, don’t change the mirror. Of course putting some dark powder on the mirror will result in hiding the dirty spots you don’t like on your face. But that’s not what we want. Face the clear mirror, if you don’t like what you see, clean the dirty spots on your face. That’s the only meaningful change we need to make.

PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray: Father, as we continue to live in this changing world, sanctify us by your Word. Your Word is Truth. May your Holy Spirit mend our ways, thoughts, words, and actions, so we can conform to your word of truth, and not to the world around us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, who taught us to pray saying:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

The guest preacher will introduce the final hymn saying....

“Let all of us who are able, stand and join in one voice to sing our closing hymn, “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”, #379 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less” *The Hymnal #379*

As the hymn ends, the preacher will move to the front of the nave at the bottom of the Chancel steps to deliver the benediction.

“Would you join me in reading the responsive benediction as it is printed in your bulletins.”

*RESPONSIVE BLESSING

May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers; may he never leave us nor forsake us.

May he turn our hearts to him, to walk in all his ways & to keep the commands, decrees & regulations he gave our fathers.

In the name of the Father, & of the Son, & of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

After the benediction, the preacher will walk down the center aisle and stand outside the North door of the Narthex to greet and be greeted.

*THE CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Sanctuary"

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, Pure and holy, tried and true;

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for You.

POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis