

Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia
Sunday, October 11th, 2015

The liturgist and pastor will meet in the hall outside the choir room a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am. The liturgist will enter followed by the pastor. The pastor will step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....

The preacher 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 preacher will take a seat.

PRELUDE “Diapason Dialogue” - Gordon Young Dr. Elizabeth Davis

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP “Rejoice in the Day!” - Dan Dykema The Choir

After the Choral Call, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 112 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP (adapted from Psalm 112)

Praise the Lord! Happy are those who fear the Lord, who greatly delight in his commandments.

Their descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.

Wealth and riches are in their houses, and their righteousness endures forever.

They rise in the darkness as a light for the upright; they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.

It is well with those who deal generously and lend, who conduct their affairs with justice.

For the righteous will never be moved; they will be remembered forever.

They are not afraid of evil tidings; their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord.

Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

They have distributed freely, they have given to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.

The wicked see it and are angry; the desire of the wicked comes to nothing.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Wise and generous Father, we surrender to the power of your love to free us from our attachment to things which do not last. By a fresh hearing of your word and outpouring of your Spirit, remind us again that everything we have comes from you. Teach us to be content in all circumstances. Deliver us from our anxieties about the money we have, as well as the money we don't have; the things that we need and the things that we want. Reassure us that you are still the Good Shepherd who leads us to green pastures and still waters, and who will ever keep us free from want. Free us from all attachments other than your love revealed in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “O What Shall I Render”, number 557 in our *Hymnals*.

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

*HYMN OF PRAISE “O What Shall I Render?” *The Hymnal #557*

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

*CALL TO CONFESSION

Our possessions can become anchors dragging us ever deeper into sin and away from the grace of God. So let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer & perfecter of our faith. Let us pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins, pausing at its conclusion for a brief period of silent prayer. Let us pray...

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving Father, you have given us everything, even as we have given you so little of ourselves. We have been obsessed with things we wanted and did not have, even as we have failed to thank you for the abundance you have given without our even asking. We have failed to attend to the care of our souls and in so doing have neglected more needful things, such as the needs of the poor and the poor in Spirit around us.

Forgive us, we pray. Empty our hands, that they might be yours to fill. Empty our hearts from their earthly desires, that they may be filled with your grace. Refresh our spirits and rekindle our faith, compassion and generosity. We ask this in the name of our Savior and Friend, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who is there to condemn us? Christ died for us, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, and who indeed intercedes for us. 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

Having been reconciled to God through the grace of His Son, let us also be reconciled to one another and share Christ's peace. 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...

“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 Ms. Karen.”

The preacher will take a seat.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

(All Singing)

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 liturgist will step to the pulpit and say,

“Let those of us who are able, stand and join in singing our next hymn, “We Give Thee but Thine Own” #428 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“We Give Thee but Thine Own”

The Hymnal #428

After the hymn, the preacher will step to the lectern microphone & say:

In the Fall of each year, our congregation examines our role as stewards of God's blessings and our call to live as Christ lived, as examples of extravagant generosity. Bringing us the first of our lessons in Stewardship this morning is our Stewardship Campaign Chair, Mr. Todd Connelly...

The liturgist will take a seat while Todd comes forward...

A MINUTE FOR STEWARDSHIP

Todd Connelly

After the Minute for Mission, the liturgist will return to the lectern & say

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

At this time, I would like to invite the members of the children's choir to come forward and take a seat on the front steps of the Chancel while we prepare to receive the offering.

Do not wait for the children to arrive at the front before continuing....

As long as we rely upon things of earth for security and comfort, our very souls are endangered and our discipleship is threatened. Let us lift our sights and our hearts unto God, and give thanks as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings....

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

THE OFFERTORY

"Sarabande" - Gordon Young

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

*DOXOLOGY (In Unison)

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, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

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

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray... Merciful God, you have shown us the true meaning of generosity, blessing us with abundance and giving even the life of your own Son for us. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of your work of peace and redemption in this world. We ask that you receive our gifts and use them to further your purposes in our lives & in the lives of others. Amen.

The liturgist will take a seat until after the Anthem.

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 take a seat.

THE ANTHEM

"Do Lord Medley"

The Children's Choir

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson for this morning is taken from the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 58, beginning with the sixth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #638 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?"

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in."

Our Gospel Reading this morning is taken from the Gospel of Mark, the tenth chapter, beginning with the seventeenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #878 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” They were greatly astounded and said to one another, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.”

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Sold Out”

Did you hear about the little boy that loved collecting marbles. He lived next door to a little girl who had a lot of candy.

She said to him: “If you’ll give me all of your marbles, I’ll give you all of my candy.”

He said he’d think about it. The next day, he hid a few of the marbles in his room and offered the rest to the little girl for her candy. That night, he couldn't get to sleep. He tossed and he turned and he turned all night because he was troubled.

And what do you think troubled him so much he couldn't sleep? Was it that he felt guilty about having given less than he had promised? Nope, what troubled him was the gnawing question, “Did she really give me all of her candy?”

In our story this morning, we meet a man who had done well for himself in life. He wanted to make sure that he had checked all the boxes he needed to check to guarantee himself that eternal life was his. So he came to Jesus and said: “Good teacher, what must **I do** to inherit eternal life?”

And Jesus looked at him, long enough to see what the real problem was, and then he loved him, enough to tell him the truth he didn’t want to hear: “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

A few years ago, the Obama administration maintained that IF the rich didn't give more to underwrite certain government social programs that that would be “morally troubling”.

Supporting that belief, comedian Stephen Colbert referred to this story about the rich young ruler we've read today and said roughly the same thing that preacher had said in that video: “Jesus actually said rich people should sell all their possessions and give the money to the poor.”

Now, there’s a couple of problems with Stephen Colbert’s statement:

First, Jesus certainly never told the rich to sell all they had and give it to the Government. I can say that without the slightest fear of contradiction. It never happened.

Second, Jesus never said that **everyone** who is rich should sell all they have and give it all to the poor.

Now granted, the Bible does teach that the rich are responsible to help the poor. Greater wealth calls for greater responsibility and God expects the wealthy to step up and help those who are less fortunate. But Jesus NEVER said that all rich people should sell ALL they had and then give it to the poor. He didn’t tell Zaccheus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus-- all very rich men-- to do that.

He **ONLY** said that to the rich young ruler. And He only said it to him because this young man was diseased. He was infected. He was sick in his soul.

- He was eaten up with pride-- proud that he could take care of himself. Proud that he didn’t have to depend upon anyone doing anything for him. He didn’t even think that he needed anyone to save his soul-- he was a good person. He kept the law, and he did it *perfectly*.

For someone that self-sufficient there was only one cure for what ailed him – he needed to sell out, sell everything, and give the money to the poor and follow Jesus. By selling it all, he would have nothing to serve as his safety net, no way to pay his own way, provide for his own needs, scratch his own itches. Jesus wants him to look to God to provide, to watch over, and to care for him. He wants him to trust, to put his faith in a power greater than himself.

If this young man wanted ALL that Jesus could give then he needed to give Jesus ALL that he had. Jesus was calling for him to be sold out for Him. In fact, Jesus did that repeatedly to everyone who wanted to follow Him. He repeatedly called for His followers to be sold out for Him.

Jesus invited people to follow him, but Jesus warned them, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (In other words, if one follows Jesus, one might not have a place to live.)

Another answered his invitation by saying, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family."

Jesus replied, "No-one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Over and over again, Jesus repeatedly called them to be sold out for Him.

Essentially, Jesus was saying: "if you're not going to give me everything... don't bother me."

Jesus isn't interested in just some of their marbles... He wanted it all.

For Jesus – it's all or nothing.

In the days of Jesus, if you called someone your "Lord" it meant that they owned you. They were the Master, you were the slave.

"Did slaves own anything?" you might ask. "Absolutely not", I would answer.

When you call Jesus you're Lord, you have turned ownership of your possessions over to Him. He has bought and paid for you.

Take out your wallets for a minute. Go ahead, I'll wait. ... Everything in that wallet belongs to God. I give Him a portion of that every Sunday, but it ALL belongs to Him. The money we don't give to the church is spent on bills, entertainment, food, shelter, medical care...etc.-- but it is all spent with the understanding that it is God's money. What we use that money for should reflect the God that I serve.

Do you have pictures in your wallet? Spouse... kids... grandkids... your family belongs to Jesus too. They're not mine, they're His. And so God will hold me accountable for how I treat them.

Do you have a driver's license? Remember your car... it belongs to Jesus.

Do you have some keys? To your house, business, storage building? Well, that's his too. He will let you use it for as long as you need it. But use it with gratitude, remembering that you are accountable for how you use it.

Do you have a little calendar tucked away in there? Well, let it remind you that your time is his, and he has already written every one of your days in the Book of life and nothing you can do can extend that time by even a nanosecond. The next time you are asked to do something for Jesus and you start to answer, "I'm too busy. I don't have the time." Remember that it is not your time. Your time is His time. Your hands are his. Your heart is his. Your tongue is His. Your brain is His. Your feet are His.

Now did you know that's what you were signing on for when made your profession of faith? Anytime you don't like the deal, you can get out of it. If you think Jesus asks too much of you, you, like the rich young ruler can just walk away.

We have to come to grips with the fact that God wants all of our marbles - all of our resources - and that He wants us to USE those resources to invest in His kingdom. Just as an example:

I talked to a young man from another church just recently who's been taking kids to youth group and church every Sunday, and his minivan just isn't doing the job anymore.

So, he and his wife have decided they need to invest in a 15 passenger van. It won't belong to the church. They'll pay for it, keep it insured, pay for upkeep, and fill it with gas-- but it will belong to God. The vehicle's main purpose will be in getting kids church that might not get there otherwise get there.

My point is – folks like these are sold out for Jesus. They've put all their marbles on the table and invested them in God's Kingdom. But your marbles are different than their marbles. But Jesus still wants them, and he wants them all.

Why is it so hard to do that?

Remember the story I told at the beginning of the sermon? Remember why that little boy tossed and turned all night long? He wondered: Did she give me ALL her candy? Did she give ALL she promised?

And that's why many people don't sell out for Jesus. They don't believe Jesus will give them ALL that He promised.

Jesus said: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness..."

Now, what is the rest of the verse? . . . Oh yeah – "and ALL these things shall be added unto you as well."

Now, I know it's tough to believe God sometimes. But I also know that if you don't... the only person who loses out (pause) is YOU. For instance, if you don't believe God wants your all, and that He will provide for all your needs, why would you believe that Christ died for you, that he has forgiven you all your sins, and that he is even now preparing a room for you in his house in heaven?

If you're willing to put it on the line for Jesus, if you're willing to give Him ownership of all you are and have, Jesus promises to that all these things shall be added unto you as well.

Go ahead, give him all your marbles-- it's the smart move.

Those who don't-- well, all I can say is that they must have already lost their marbles.

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

God our Father, guide our hearts. Free us from ourselves. Teach us to be content in all circumstances. Forbid that our roots should become so firmly attached to this earth, that we should be forever bound to it and miss the glories of our heavenly home. Help us to remember that this life is but an introduction, a preface for the real life that we will only know when that which is perishable shall put on imperishability.

To that end, Father, help us to put this life and the things of this world in their proper perspective, that we may fall in love, not with that which will pass away as a morning mist, but that which will endure forever. Only then will we be saved from the yrrany of the possessions that enslave us and which we have no leisure to enjoy, and whose care is a burden. Give us the courage to simplify our lives, so that we may become mature in our faith-- childlike, but never childish; humble, but never cringing; understand, but never conceited-- all so that we may truly live and not just exist, following after Him who loves us enough to tell us what we need to know and not just what we want to hear, whose demand for our all is our salvation, and 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.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "Take My Life", verses 1, 4, 5, & 6, #391 in our *Hymnal*.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Take My Life" (verses 1, 4-6)

The Hymnal #391

*THE BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and give you His peace-- in your coming in and your going out; in your lying down and in your rising up; in your labor and in your leisure; in your laughter and in your tears; until you come to stand before Jesus in that day in which there is no sunset & no dawning. Amen.

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

"Freely, Freely"

Freely, freely, you have received. Freely, freely give.

Go in my name and because you believe. Others will know that I live.

*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis