

Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia

Sunday, October 18th, 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

Dialogue" - François Couperin

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

The Choir

“Let Us Go Unto the House of the Lord” - Dan Dykema

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 91 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 91)

Because you have made the Lord your refuge, and the Most High your habitation,

There shall no evil happen to you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.

For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

They shall bear you in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone.

You shall tread upon the lion and adder; you shall trample them under your feet.

Because we are bound to Him in love, therefore will He deliver us;

He will protect us, because we know His Name.

We shall call upon Him, and He will answer us;

He is with us in trouble to rescue us and bring us to honor.

With long life will we satisfy Him, and He will show us His salvation.

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Let us pray... Almighty and Gracious God, we open our hearts and our minds to you that you may enter in. Bless us in this time of worship with your holy presence. Help us let go of all anxiety and worry. Support us with your loving arms and help us to lift up our voices in praise and thanksgiving. Pour out your spirit upon us that we might love you more purely and be able to bring your grace and your compassion, your power and your truth, and your joy and your peace to our suffering world. We ask it in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim”, number 477 in our *Hymnals*.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE** “Ye Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim” *The Hymnal #477*

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

We who are called to be servants often forget what it means to serve others. Because success so often appears more attractive than service, we focus on getting ahead, which often means leaving behind those who cannot keep up. This is a time to confess our selfish ways that we may be healed and change our way to that which will lead us home. Let us pray together the prayer of confession as it's printed in our bulletin, pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Holy God, we confess that we are prone to seek places of honor, privilege, and reward, and to compare ourselves with others when it suits our purpose. We talk about serving you, but we do not want the rank of servant. We have lots of ideas about what you might do to intervene in the world and little

commitment to what we might do in your name. We prefer privilege without pain, and greatness without the grind of hard work. Forgive us, Lord, and fold us under your wings once more, that we may be saved from ourselves. Amen.

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

*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Jesus Christ was numbered among the transgressors so that he might bear our sins, pour out his life, and face death on our behalf-- just so that we might be reckoned as righteous. Thank God for Him, who came to serve rather than be served and who gave up His life as a ransom for many.... 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, “Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak” #426 in our *Hymnals*.

*HYMN OF PRAISE

“Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak”

The Hymnal #426

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. Our second lesson in Stewardship comes to us this morning in a video entitled “First fruits”

The liturgist will take a seat...

A MINUTE FOR STEWARDSHIP

“Firstfruits” - a Video

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

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Jesus gave life itself as an offering for our sin. What shall we give in thanksgiving for life and salvation? Let us thank the One who made us and redeemed us and who offers us peace for today and hope for tomorrow, by bringing our gifts of time and treasure to invest in His service. Let us give with joy, as we are able, and continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

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

THE OFFERTORY

"Benedictus" - François Couperin

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... Holy and Almighty Father, may your will be realized through the gifts we offer and dedicate to your service. Hear our prayer for all who may be helped by what we give. We offer more than money; we offer ourselves. May the act of giving strengthen our commitment to the causes for which Christ died and involve us in the acts of compassion for which Christ lived. May all we say and do, work to accomplish your peace. 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

"The Time for Turning" - Craig Courtney

The 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 Book of Hebrews chapter 5, beginning with the first verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #1046 in your pew bibles.

Listen now for the word of God...

“For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchiz'edek."

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchiz'edek.”

*The liturgist will take his seat, or, if you prefer,
you may return to the congregation to sit with your family or friends.
Thanks for your service.*

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The preacher will then return to the pulpit and say...

Our Gospel Reading this morning is taken from the Gospel of Mark, the tenth chapter, beginning with the thirty-fifth 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...

“And James and John, the sons of Zeb'edee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?"

And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

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

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

“Will the Real Leaders Please.... *Kneel Down?*”

How should we think about James and John, the sons of Zebedee? How should we think about the day they went to Jesus and said to him:

"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

And when Jesus answered, "What is it you want me to do for you?" They replied:

"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory."

How should we think about these two who were so forward that they not only wanted to stand out from the crowd, they also wanted to stand ahead of the other disciples and have the highest positions of power and privilege that they believed Jesus could grant.

We know how Peter and Matthew and Levi and the others reacted to James and John when they heard what James and John had asked Jesus to do for them. We know that they were angry with the sons of Zebedee, that they resented the two brothers' attempt to claim a position of privilege in the Kingdom of God.

The single most difficult lesson these disciples-- all of them--- had to learn, was what it meant to be a Christian leader.

Those of us older than 40 probably remember the events of March 15, 1981 when President Reagan was shot by John Hinckley. Vice-President George Bush was out in California and communications with his aircraft were for some reason non-functioning so the vice_President was not immediately available. The White House was a mad house of conflicting reports and no clear chain of command. That's when Gen. Alexander Haig, Secretary of State, who was at the White House, stepped in & asserted to the press and a national audience--"I'm in charge here!"

All the way up to his death in 2010, he was never able to live those four words down.

HE thought he was doing was providing crisis leadership.

What the country saw was a man hungry for power.

So how should WE think about James and John?

Should we regard them as being overly ambitious or as thinking too much of themselves?

Or should we just ignore them and charge it off to an obvious lack of tact? Should we just overlook the reaction of the other disciples?

My feeling is that we need to regard James and John and their audacious request with far more seriousness than we may want at first to give them.

My belief is that we should regard James and John as if they were us. And that then we should really listen to what Jesus had to say to them and to the other disciples.

Why? Because we need to learn the same lessons of discipleship that they needed to learn. Chief among them being, You can not lead without serving.

Someone once called a preacher to say he wanted to become a church member, but, he went on to explain that he did not want to commit to coming to worship every week, He had no real desire to study the Bible, visit the sick, or teach Sunday school, or even serve on a church committee.

The minister commended him for his desire to be a church member, but told him the church he was looking for was located in another part of town.

The man wrote down the address and hung up.

When he arrived at that address, the man came face to face with the inevitable consequence of his unwillingness to participate in the life of the church. There stood an abandoned church building boarded up and ready for demolition.

They disciples wanted to be important. They wanted to be regarded as valuable members of the church community... but they misunderstood what that meant. They thought it had nothing to do with what they did and everything to do with WHO THEY WERE.

If only they could be important. If only they could have a position of power. If only they could be specially talented... THEN THEY COULD BE USEFUL TO GOD. But the reality is just the opposite. How often have we heard that God does not call the equipped, He equips those He calls. 1Corinthians 1:27-29 tells us "God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no-one may boast before him."

It isn't who you are, or how powerful you are. It has nothing to do with your abilities and everything to do with your availability. Think about these people that God called to serve Him. Moses stuttered, was on the lam for a murder he had committed years before, and yet he was the very one God called to lead His people out of Egypt and into the Promised land.

David's was just a boy, He didn't know how to use a bow and arrow. The sword they gave him was bigger than he was. His armor didn't fit. He wasn't even in the army-- he was only there to deliver his brothers' groceries.

Jacob was a liar and a cheat, but he was to become Israel, the first of God's chosen people.

Abraham was too old. Timothy had ulcers. Peter was afraid of death. Lazarus was dead. Miriam was a gossip & bigot. Gideon and Thomas both doubted. Jeremiah was a whiner and a cry-baby. Elijah was burned out. Samson had an eye for the ladies.

And God used everyone of them and made us to remember their names 2000 years and more after their death.

The disciples wanted to serve Jesus as long as it was convenient, as long as it didn't require themselves to humble themselves before those who they viewed as less worthy than themselves. They couldn't see how Jesus could use tax collectors, fishermen, and laborers. They thought He would needed men of power and prominence.

John Brodie, former quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, and was being used by his football team to hold the ball for the kicker. A sports reporter asked him why a million-dollar player like him should have to hold the ball for field goals and extra points after the touchdown. "Well," said Brodie, "if I didn't, it would fall over."

Brodie understood that his value to the team was BEING THERE for the team. It was in "holding the ball so it didn't fall over." It was in "doing what needed to be done, so the team could succeed." That's the type of person Jesus is looking for.

Being there is what it is all about.

Does it bother you as much as it does me that Radical Muslims can get men, women, and even children, to strap bombs to themselves and kill Gentiles and Jews because they believe in their own sick and twisted way that it glorifies God? What is amazing is that people are willing to die for a cause like that when so many Christians are afraid to let it be known that they are followers of Christ, afraid to commit to serve on the Session or Diaconate, afraid to teach a class of anything, afraid to sing in the

choir, or ring bells, or cook supper. Afraid to commit to doing anything that might limit their options to choose a more attractive option later.

Newsweek ran an article some time back about street gangs. In it they told the story of a preacher who was trying to reach out to slum dwellers for Christ. When he first moved into this neighborhood, as a refugee from Harvard, Rev. Rivers sought out a local drug dealer (to ask him why he was so successful in dragging people into his criminal lifestyle)... and he gave Rivers a lesson in why God was losing to gangs in the battle for the souls of inner city kids. Selvin, the gang leader, explained, 'I'm there when Johnny goes out for a loaf of bread for Mama. I'm there, you're not. I win, you lose, It's all about being there.'

As G.K. Chesterton once said, "The real tragedy of Christianity is not that it has been tried and found wanting.... It is that it has been tried and found difficult."

I have never dreamed, and I doubt that any of you have ever dreamed, of actually sitting at the right hand of God and receiving all the glory and honor and respect and power that position has.

Jesus could not tell James or John who would end up sitting at his left or his right hand. As he said to them, it was not even something that he could grant. But I can tell you that Jesus himself sits at the right hand of God.

He sits there because he gave himself to us wholly and completely, because he served God and served us all with all of his heart and soul and body. Jesus knew how to **BE THERE**.

I can tell you that he gave food to the hungry and that he visited the sick, forgave the sinners, and loved the unloveable.

I can tell you that Jesus didn't just wash people's souls clean of sin, he kneeled beside them and washed their feet clean of dust and dirt.

And not once did he complain that no one appreciated him, nor did he open his mouth when he was reviled and persecuted.

I offer you today a reminder of who is at the right hand of God and of some of the reasons for why he is there.

I offer you this reminder in the name of God, so that when you speak to your children, and when you consider what is worth while and what is worthy of respect and what jobs are beneath your dignity, and what insults you cannot bear, you will know what is right.

I call you this day to remember James and John, and how we ourselves are like them.

And finally I call you to remember that James and John, were among the chosen ones and remained among the chosen ones, and that Jesus served them and gave his life for them-- **just as he has given his life for you.**

Years ago in a church prayer meeting, there was a faithful old elder who always used the same phrase in his public prayers. He would pray: "O Lord, touch the unsaved with Thy finger."

One night however, after leading in prayer as he often did and repeating that old phrase again ("O Lord, touch the unsaved with Thy finger."), he abruptly stopped praying. Afterwards, one of the members thinking that maybe the elder had become ill, took him aside and asked if anything was wrong, was he ill.

"No," replied the elder, "I'm not ill. But something seemed to say to me, 'Thou are the finger.'"

If you would be that finger of God to touch the lives of those who need Him,... Lose the swagger.... Shed the ego.... Strip off the pride.... Don't worry about being first. When there is a need, **BE THERE!**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gracious and giving God, we thank you for your Son Jesus, who humbled himself and came to us a servant - as one of the least among us. O loving God, when I dream of power, let me dream of the power to help others as he helped others, and Lord, when I wake, help me to care as he cared. Pour forth your strength and your joy and your peace and your glory upon us - not that we might be exalted - but

that we may be able to bear what would otherwise be a bitter burden and that we may be able to drink the cup that would otherwise overwhelm us.

Lord, as we sit with our eyes closed to the distractions of this world and our hands and our hearts open to you - we ask you to hear our concerns for others that we so often bury because of our fear that we might not be able to bear their pain with them or that we may not be adequate to the challenge of demonstrating your unconditional and abiding love. Answer our silent hope that you might dwell richly within us and grant us some sign that we may cling to when we are tempted to surrender to the easy and evil way. Lord you walked our walk, now help us to walk yours. All this we pray in the name of him 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, "Are Ye Able?", printed in our bulletins.

*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Are Ye Able?"

"Are ye able," said the Master, "To be crucified with Me?"

"Yea," the sturdy dreamers answered, "To the death we follow Thee."

Lord, we are able. Our spirits are Thine. Remold them, make us, like Thee, divine.

Thy guiding radiance above us shall be A beacon to God, to love and loyalty.

Are ye able to remember, when a thief lifts up his eyes,

That his pardoned soul is worthy of a place in paradise? *Refrain*

"Are ye able?", still the Master whispers down eternity,

And heroic spirits answer, now as then in Galilee. *Refrain*

*THE CHARGE AND BLESSING

Go into the world in peace knowing that wherever you go, God is sending you. Wherever you are, God has put you there. He has a purpose in your being there. Christ who dwells in you has something He wants to do through you where you are. Believe this and go in His grace and love and power. Amen.

*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