

Sunday, October 23rd, 2016

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 10:40am. After a brief prayer with the choir, the liturgist will enter and take his/her seat. The pastor will follow, 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.**

PRELUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" - Michael Burkhardt

CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

"This Is the Day!" - Dan Dykema

The Choir

After the choir is finished, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 50 and printed in our bulletins?”

CALL TO WORSHIP

(adapted from Psalm 50:14-23)

The mighty one, God the Lord, speaks and shines forth.

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Our God comes and does not keep silence, before him is a devouring fire.

He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people:

“Gather to me my faithful ones, who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!”

The heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge.

Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.

Call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

But to the wicked God says: “What right have you to take my covenant on your lips?”

“Mark this, then, you who forget God, or I will tear you apart, and there will be no one to deliver.

Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me;

To those who go the right way I will show the salvation of God.”

Let us worship God beginning with prayer....

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Awesome God, you have given us life and kept our feet from slipping. We thank you now for bringing us to this place of worship and thanksgiving. Implant your Word among us and free us to live by it. Inspire us to speak truthfully and listen attentively. May we prove to be faithful workers, devoted to healing and reconciliation in Jesus' name, forever grateful for your tender mercies. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand and join in singing the hymn, “Let All Things Now Living”, number 554 in our *Hymnals*.

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

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Let All Things Now Living”

The Hymnal #554

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

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Let us pray... Our God, who called us into covenant, invites us to examine our faithfulness. Challenged to be builders and planters, our destructive ways tear down rather than build up, and yet God lovingly calls us to turn back and receive forgiveness. Let us confess our sins before God and one another using the prayer of confession as it is printed in our bulletins. Let us pray...

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

We confess, O God, that when we come to you, it is most often for the healing of our discomforts, or the lifting of our burdens. In your love, you are most concerned with the healing of our souls, and with saving us from our own selfishness & greed. Our memory of your death to atone for our sins is easily forgotten by us, abandoned in our pursuit of pleasure and profit. We ignore the needs of the lepers of our

day, leaving them to their suffering, and failing to touch their lives with the love and hope supplied by Christ. Forgive us our ingratitude and the indifference it breeds within us. Heal us, once more we pray, and make us whole. Amen.

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

***THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The proof of God's amazing love is this: while we were still sinners, Christ died 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**

We have been reconciled to the Father by the gift of his Son. Let us now be reconciled one with 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...

"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 Pastor Mike."

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

We are in the middle of our annual Stewardship Emphasis Season. This congregation's daring correspondent, Todd Connelly, has an eye opening interview with the world's biggest enemy of good stewardship, Satan himself.

A MINUTE FOR STEWARDSHIP Video #2 - "Interview with Satan"

After the video, the Liturgist will step to the microphone and say....

THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Bring gifts and gratitude to honor God. Give thanks for God's awesome deeds. May our offerings express the full measure of our thankfulness 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

Dr. Elizabeth Davis

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" Charles Callahan

***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... We bring the first fruits of our labors, the best of all we have, a portion of the bounty you entrust to us. Accept our gifts, gracious God, as a symbol of our renewed commitment. We give thanks for the wholeness you offer us amid a fragmented world. We are grateful for meaningful tasks in the midst of chaos and meaningless suffering. We dedicate ourselves and our offering to your faithful service. 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 take a seat.

THE ANTHEM

"Bless Us Now This Day" - Douglas E. Wagner

The Choir

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

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the third chapter of Paul's Letter to the Colossians, beginning at the fourteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 1028 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with family or friends in the congregation. Thank you for your service.

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

Our sermon text today is taken from the seventeenth Chapter of the Gospel of Luke, beginning at the eleventh verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #910 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

"The Difference"

Newspaper columnist Ann Landers created quite a flap a few years ago when she carried a letter from a grandmother who was frustrated over never receiving thank you notes from her grandchildren for gifts she regularly sent them for birthdays and other special occasions.

Ann advised her to quit sending them, which prompted a flood of letters, some agreeing and others not. One of those who disagreed denounced "The nasty habit of programming innocent little children to say 'Please' and 'Thank you. I'm afraid it's just training in hypocrisy."

To thank or not to thank isn't just a question of habit and convention; it's an issue of real consequence. If a superficial "thanks" is little better than a conditioned reflex, scarcely worthy of a thinking, feeling human being, the failure to say thanks at all is worse still. Early lessons in manners aren't wrong, they're merely not enough.

My kids would always ask me, "What difference does it make?" They would argue that the giver

knew the gift had been received, and, if the giver loved them, they would know that the gift was appreciated. So **what's the difference?**

For instance... When we are ill, we go to the doctor. If a doctor uses his tremendous skills to heal us, that's good, but today, there is rarely any sense of undying gratitude for his having saved our life. After all, that's his job. That's what he gets paid for. And if the cure is not forthcoming, if there are complications, if the doctor makes a mistake, then he is sued.

We tend to do the same thing with God. No doubt the nine lepers said to each other and to their friends and relatives, "Well, it's about time! This is God's business, isn't it? To heal and restore? To give joy and delight? It's about time that God was about his proper business. He cursed me with leprosy, it's about time he healed me of it!"

From there it's only a short step to the point where we think the only religion worth having is a religion that "works", that gets me what I want. If I read the Bible every day, say my prayers, go to church, then good things had better come my way.

With this attitude, we are no better than the ancient Jews whoring after their fertility gods. Worship of the Baals promised them seeds and rain and sun, and birth and procreation and abundant crops & herds.

The difference between God and the Baals is that the Baals promised health and wealth, and delivered nothing. God makes no such promise of health and wealth to the faithful, but delivers, nonetheless, gifts in unlimited quantity and variety.

If the fact that our religion "works" is the major test of its validity, and God is at the end of our string to pull in whatever direction we may see fit, then God has ceased to be God for us.

It has not always been this way. I remember my grandmothers, both giving thanks to God every morning for the simplest of gifts... allowing them to open their eyes, to fill their lungs one more time with clean morning air, to live one more day surrounded by the blessings of a home, friends, and family.

Why this change in attitude over the years? **What's the difference** between now and 50 years ago? Let's look at today's gospel lesson.

Out in Samaria, on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus met ten very sick people. Ten lepers. Here are ten people who have been cast out of family & home, made to wander helplessly because they are afflicted with a dreaded disease. Here are not only ten sick people but also, without stretching things too far, ten of the walking dead. As far as these lepers' families are concerned, they are dead.

Standing well away from Jesus (as lepers were required by law to do) they cry out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

Jesus looks at them and tells them to go "show yourselves to the priests." Jesus is referring to Leviticus 14:2-3 which specifies what the priest is to do with a leper who happens to get healed. A leper was not allowed in the temple because lepers were thought to be "unclean." If cured, the leper must be ritually purified, and certified "clean" by the priest in order to worship at the temple.

So Jesus' command to them is a bit confusing. They have asked to be healed. But Jesus has done nothing to heal them. He's only told them to go and act as if they are healed. Go, present yourselves to the priest as if you are whole, healed, accepted, living people.

So, they go... and on the way all ten of them are healed, and nine of them just kept going. They made no connection between Jesus' command and their recovery from leprosy. After all, Jesus didn't do what they expected. He didn't touch them with mud and spit, as he once did a blind man. He didn't command any demons to come out of them, as he did some sick people. He didn't even say, "Be healed." As far as they are concerned, Jesus had nothing to do with their healing.

But one leper, a Samaritan, made the connection. He came back, loudly praising God, screaming at the top of his lungs.

That's the first difference... he came back.

It's tough to have to go back and do something-- it costs time and effort. Remember when you were little, hearing your parent's voice admonishing...

"Go back and pick it up"

"Go back and try again"

"Go back and see if you can find your mistake"

"Go back and thank the lady for the candy"

Going back is a chore, a nuisance... for child or an adult. Hardly any one likes to retreat for anything; it slows us down; it interrupts our progress.

That's probably why the nine healed lepers didn't return to give thanks for their healing. They were grateful, of course: they had been restored to health. They just didn't want to go all the way back. The man who healed them would surely understand. Besides, the Samaritan was going back; no need for all of them to return. Maybe they called after him, "Thank him for us, too, Sam !"

So the Samaritan turned back, and Jesus inquired about the others, "Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"

At the beginning, the ten lepers want nothing more or less than to be healed which, means they would get to go back home to a "normal life." That's all they ever really asked for, just a chance to "be like other people," an opportunity to go back home and be like everybody else, *normal*. They assume that's what Jesus, is all about, a return to the normal.

All the other nine wanted from Jesus was to be made well, to go back home and start all over again, doing what everybody else had been doing-- going to school, driving to work on Mondays, meeting some nice Galilean and maybe starting a family of nice, normal, ordinary kids. And who would blame them?

But that one Samaritan comes back because he alone saw that his healing, his "resurrection" wasn't just something for the future. It was for now. He was saved and accepted by Jesus now, while he was a leper, when he was still sick, untouchable, before he got well. This Samaritan, came back to Jesus. He returned. The old way of living wasn't good enough. He wanted something more.

Difference number two is-- The Samaritan gave thanks.

The life of the despised Samaritan, who returned to give thanks and praise, was consecrated in a way that the other nine were not-- delighted as they may have been with the gift of health. This despised Samaritan's life became holy in a way the lives of the other nine were not. For gifts that are consecrated in thanks and praise to God become bearers of grace.

For those of you who would bridge this deep chasm between faith and life, the gap between what goes on in church and what goes on in the world ...here is one first and indispensable step: Thank the Giver for the gift of life, of healing, of joy, of employment, of skill-- and thus consecrate it. For thus does the holy enter into the world.

Difference number three is the biggest difference of all-- the nine were healed, the Samaritan was saved and made whole.

Most modern translations mistranslate, or at the very least, fail to make clear this last difference Luke uses 2 different words to express the idea of healing. The first is *iadoumeia*, which expresses a cure or healing from a particular physical ailment. The second word sozo means that and more. It is used to refer to a spiritual as well as a physical healing. Sozo is from the same root from that we usually translate as salvation. To be "idoumeia-ed" is to be cured of a physical ailment such as a cold, a cut, even leprosy, here and now. To be "Sozo-ed" is to delivered from not just disease, but the demons to which they give birth-- loneliness, fear, sorrow, despair. To be "sozo-ed" isn't just being made well, it is being made **whole**.

The Samaritan wasn't just healed of leprosy. He was raised from death to life. And not just to his old ordinary life, but a life filled to overflowing with love, peace, hope, joy, and purpose. He wasn't just going home from a hospital, Jesus freed him from prison and released him from hell.

Do you remember where Luke tells us Jesus was going when he encountered the ten lepers? He was on his way to Jerusalem. He was on his way to die. To die so that we could be forgiven, and raised so that we could live a new and better life with him.

Does the fire and passion seemed to have gone out of your spiritual life. Would you like it back? Then come back and give thanks.

Have you remembered to thank God for:

- a good night's sleep
- a day of blue sky and sunshine that gets you outside
- a day of gray skies and drizzle that keeps you inside
- the unexpected voice of a distant friend on the telephone
- the comfort of the Psalms
- the beauty of John 1
- Mozart
- Haagen-Daz
- uncontrollable laughter
- unashamed tears
- Tylenol
- your spouse
- your children

Every time we turn around... Every time we come back to Jesus.... Every time we give thanks for the all the blessings, large and small that we receive each and every day. The holy enters our lives. Jesus looks in our direction and says to us.... "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you whole."

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray...

Gracious God, you have not always given us what we have wanted, but you invariably give us more than we really need. We come to you as the God who can secure all of our desires, when what you want is to supply our needs. We often pray to you as the God who gives us what we want, when what we need is instruction by you in teaching us to want that which is really worth having.

Therefore, when we pray to you, we pray as did our Lord, "Not our wills but thy will be done." Teach us the wisdom that comes from looking at the world with a view broader than our own narrow interests, and to demonstrate our gratitude to you the giver of all good and perfect gifts, the one who perfects our desires, who judges our wants, and who has already given s everything to live in joy and contentment eternally, through Christ our Lord, 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.

Would all of you who are able please stand and join in singing the hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God", number 555 in our *Hymnals*.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"Now Thank We All Our God"

The Hymnal #555

Please be seated....

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

***THE BLESSING**

May the blessings of God Almighty; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be upon you all, both now, and forevermore. Amen.

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE**

"Alleluia, Alleluia! Give Thanks"

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord.

Alleluia, Alleluia! Give praise to His Name.

***POSTLUDE**

Dr. Elizabeth Davis