

TCC Takeout

An Order of Service for Worship at Home

God's Extravagant Welcome:

“No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, YOU are welcome here!”

June 21, 2020

Third Sunday of Pentecost

Father's Day



ANNOUNCEMENT

From Lee-Ellen Strawn:

I am delighted to worship with Trinitarian Congregational Church this summer starting today, the third Sunday of Pentecost and also Father's Day. Thank you for inviting me. You will have seen from the Trumpet Blast that there are two ways the Sunday worship services will be shared; TCC Takeout and Sunday 9am live Zoom Worship. The Zoom Worship will closely follow the Takeout order. For everyone's convenience the order for the Zoom Sunday service will be posted in the Zoom chat each Sunday morning.

Additionally, I would like to thank Ted Thornton for all the work that goes into posting this Takeout on the church's website, Heather Tower and Chris Harris for sharing music this Sunday, Gwen Trelle for hosting the zoom sessions, and Martha Morse for answering my many questions!

INTROIT [The Family Prayer Song](#)

CALL TO WORSHIP

The sun shines more brightly.
Its warmth stays with us for so many more hours.

So we shake free of our routines.

In this new moment,
We dwell in the presence of the Creator:
Hoping God will open our eyes,
Praying God will make us worthy,
Wanting to grow with God.

Let us grow together in the ways of our God. Amen.

OPENING HYMN [Like A River In My Soul](#)

GATHERING PRAYER (*inspired by Psalm 86:1-10, 16-17*)

All powerful God, you do great and wonderful things.

It's what makes you our God.

There is nothing else in this world like you.

There's nothing else like your love.

O God, come and worship with us.

Help us to grow in your love.

Amen.

GLORIA PATRI ([Audio Version](#))

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning,

Is now and ever shall be,

World without end,

Amen, Amen.

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Romans 6:1-11 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death

he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10:24-39

'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!
²⁶ 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.³² 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.³⁴ 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

REFLECTION

For today's sermon I will focus on the passage from Matthew. But this is not an easy one to digest, to say the least. It's the kind of passage, with its mention of a sword, tearing up the family dynamic, maybe even forsaking loved ones to follow Jesus and losing one's life, that might make folks downright hesitant about Christianity, rather than embracing of it. So for the first Sunday this summer that I am with you, it seems the Holy Spirit is having us jump right in; there's no gradual getting used to things! This passage from Matthew is a hard passage that states loudly and clearly being a Christian is not a trivial matter or a feel-good affair. If we find that our faith stays within the limits of our comfort zones, then this passage may be challenging us to reflect and repent.

In fact, recently, I heard someone say that if religion is good for anything in this scientific, 21st century world, it is good because it calls us to repentance. What I understood in that comment is that religion holds out the possibility that we can stop in our tracks, look at our world and our lives honestly, and do things differently. Religion holds out the hope that today's problems, injustices, sufferings, do not have to be tomorrow's, if we resist succumbing to our old ways.

When we think about repentance, we have to distinguish between what is false and what is truth. There's no sense in repenting if we can't see that our words and actions do not align with the truth. Repentance is possible only in the context of truth. And I think Jesus is saying something about the character of truth in this passage.

In Matthew chapter 10 Jesus has called his twelve disciples and has given them a mission. This is the setting for the verses we read today. It's as if Jesus is saying, in verses 26 through 32, to the disciples who he has commissioned, 'look, be encouraged because truth is powerful. It cannot be kept secret and it will be uncovered. The truth, therefore, should be told in the light, and the truth is what you should fear, because, unlike other worldly powers that can harm the body, truth can pierce your soul. But, Jesus continues in the next verses as if to drive home the point that the truth is no soft, fuzzy reassurance. Jesus tells the disciples, 'you might think I'm about bringing peace to this world, especially when I say God, who cares for the sparrows, will surely look after you. But I'm not going to bring you this peace if that peace doesn't hold the truth. In that case, it would be better to bring you a sword and for your family members to turn against each other than to give you a shallow and false peace. The truth is that important!' And then finally, Jesus challenges the disciples by saying, 'actually, folks, the truth is, if you want to follow me, you're going to have to make sacrifices and you can't be so intent on looking out for your own life. If your own life is all you can think about, you will actually lose any real meaning about what it means to live humanly, humanely, with other human beings.' This might be how we could paraphrase Jesus' words for our contemporary lives now.

But, how do Jesus' words about truth actually connect to our world today? In our world, filled with disinformation that contains little truth, it seems we really do need this message that reminds us to speak honestly about the truth of our lived realities, without distorting even the difficult, shameful situations in our lives. In our world that is hurting and torn apart by racism, where violence occurs because we are reluctant to respond to the truth that even now not all people are treated equally, we see clearly that no shallow peace can exist. The protests in our country these recent weeks are evidence of this. New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof recently wrote that "Black patients who sought medical treatment this spring for a fever and cough were less likely to be tested for the coronavirus than whites with the same symptoms. And, the result of the coronavirus mass layoffs is that fewer than half of African-American adults now have a job." What an example of the truth of systemic racism in this country now.... Might Jesus be saying to us that this can no longer be kept secret or silent? What is more, the truth of this reality is piercing and killing our collective soul; we feel this. To us as Christians, we should be hearing in this, the call to repentance, to stop in our tracks, look at our world and reflect, and to ask how we may have contributed even in some small or unknowing way. After all, as religious people, we are called to see the truth, to know how we have strayed as a society, and to go a new way, Christ's way, that is focused on living our lives for others. Jesus is giving us a mission, too, just as he did the twelve disciples. Yes, this passage in Matthew is all about our world today.

As a white Christian, my head, heart, mind, and soul have been filled with anger and grief over the recent murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis at the end of May. And this is so especially because such violence was not an isolated event, but has been enduring in our society. As a chaplain and history teacher, I am well aware of the connection between colonialism and Christianity. And while now in the 21st century, colonialism, as such, is no longer a prevalent phenomenon, I need to think carefully about how the church in the United States, that has shaped me and called me to serve and has been a majority white church, has not done enough to examine its own implicit biases and sometimes harmful silence when it comes to addressing racism. I believe acknowledging this is where repentance can begin. It leads Christians to the question of how our words or our images, by focusing on particular types of people, marginalize others and thereby perpetuate systems of privilege and inequality. On a simple level, I am thinking of the many Sunday School books I grew up with and still see in our churches today that depict Jesus as white. As Rev. John Dorhauer, current General Minister and President of the UCC wrote in an essay about the White Jesus, "There is nothing at all wrong with expressing solidarity with Jesus by making him look like you and your race. There is something very wrong with accepting a status quo which makes that white Jesus your, or anyone else's, only choice." (from Center for Progressive Renewal, White Privilege course) I wonder how much I am making my white Jesus the only choice for others. I wonder what the repercussions of such unconscious actions might be on others. I wonder if I have hesitated in any way to speak out against the systemic racism that harms and hurts our neighbors who are not white. In the book of James in the New Testament, we read that faith without action is dead. So, where is my action that reveals my faith that God has created all people as equally deserving of justice? How am I living out these words? Has our collective action expressed this faith of ours? If our religion is good for anything, it is that it calls us to repentance. And it calls us to repent by showing us truth and agitating us until we do something about it.

Indeed, this passage in Matthew is all about our world today and it ends with a call to discipleship, because the God that you and I believe in, will not give up on us! Romans chapter 6 verse 6 is clear about this: "We know that our old self was crucified with [Christ] so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." It is true we are no longer bound to our old ways, and as verse 11 reminds us, "[we] ...must consider [ourselves] ...alive to God in Christ Jesus!" Indeed, we are called to be disciples! And we are called to discipleship through action. Jesus says 'take up your cross and follow me.' This is an action, but we know it may be difficult, because the cross is heavy and uncomfortable. Our unconscious ways we have interacted with the world that have perpetuated our privileges and have harmed others with our silence and inaction might be our cross, and our cross may reveal things about ourselves we'd rather not see and know. But Jesus says there will be no peace without truth and change. Is that not what we also heard in the recent protest chants? 'No justice, no peace!' Yet, the cross will change us if we are willing to carry it. This is our faith; we believe in the transformative power of the cross that helps us to empty ourselves of our self-focus, so that we become open to a life of humility and compassion for others.

So friends, let us listen today, for Jesus is surely calling us now! "Take up your cross and follow me" he invites us. And we hear his promise, "those who lose their life for my sake will find it." Amen.

HYMN OF REFLECTION [Drop Drop Slow Tears](#)

Orlando Gibbons: "Drop, drop, slow tears"

text: Phineas Fletcher (1582-1650)

Drop, drop, slow tears,
And bathe those beauteous feet
Which brought from Heaven
The news and Prince of Peace:

Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercy to entreat;
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.

In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let His eye
See sin, but through my tears.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

As you take this moment to be in prayer, you may refer to the joys and concerns shared through the Trumpet Blast.

God hears all of our prayers, both those we give words to and say aloud, and those that remain silent in our hearts.

Prayer is always available to us.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Merciful and gracious God, on this third Sunday of Pentecost, we are grateful for this church community and for the ability to lift our hearts in prayer to you.

Loving God, we bring you our joys and our concerns today, and we know that you hear both our prayers spoken out loud and those that remain silent in the depth of our souls. We are grateful that in community we can pray for others and know that others will hold us in their prayers, as well.

Hear our prayers, O God, for those who need healing in body and in mind.

Hear our prayers for those who struggle for the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, and medical care.

Hear our prayers for those who have been victims of violence and unjust acts. Comfort them as only you, most gracious God, can.

Hear our prayers, Creator God, for this earth on which we live, and open our eyes that we may know how to care for it, love it, and find joy in its beauty.

And God of Truth, help us this day to repent the ways in which racism has seeped into our society and give us the courage to be agents of change for the benefit of others. We know that Pentecost happened because the first church community became impassioned with the Holy Spirit of Truth. We desire such a Pentecost today in our lives so that, like the first Christians, we, too, can be impassioned to bring your justice and peace to this world. We ask for strength to step into uncomfortable places and to go wherever Christ's cross may lead us. We want to be your disciples and by your Grace we pray you will embolden us for this mission.

But always, dear Lord, each day may we wake with joy for the life you have given us. May we live our lives as prayer to you and may we give thanks in all circumstances, for you are our Rock and Redeemer. We pray in Christ Jesus' name. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Let us join together in the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us to say ~

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE ([Audio version](#))

Hear Our Prayer, O God,
Hear our prayer, O God,
Incline Thine ear to us,
And Grant us your peace.

PASTORAL BENEDICTION

Beloved in Christ, God gives us the courage to see the truth.
And, into our hands, God gives strength
to care for and mend all broken relationships in the body of Christ.

Trust that this world is full of God's steadfast love.
And know that you and all of God's people were made for this love.
Go in this deep peace.

CHORAL BENEDICTION [His Eye Is On The Sparrow](#)

Go in peace to serve God and your neighbor in love.