

Order of Worship for October 17, 2021 8:30 AM

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Consider How the Birds Above” - Hymn #736

Confession and Forgiveness: p. 203

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: The LORD is near to the brokenhearted

C: and saves the crushed in spirit.

P: I will bless the Lord at all times;

C: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

P: My soul makes its boast in the LORD;

C: let the humble hear and be glad.

P: Oh, magnify the LORD with me,

C: and let us exalt His name together!

P: I sought the LORD, and He answered me

C: and delivered me from all my fears.

P: When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears

C: and delivers them out of all their troubles.

**ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: The LORD is near to the brokenhearted

C: and saves the crushed in spirit.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Gloria in Excelsis (Glory to God in the Highest): pg. 204

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: O God, Your divine wisdom sets in order all things in heaven and on earth. Put away from us all things hurtful and give us those things that are beneficial for us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:10–20

R: He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity. When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what

advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.

There is a grievous evil that I have seen under the sun: riches were kept by their owner to his hurt, and those riches were lost in a bad venture. And he is father of a son, but he has nothing in his hand. As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand. This also is a grievous evil: just as he came, so shall he go, and what gain is there to him who toils for the wind? Moreover, all his days he eats in darkness in much vexation and sickness and anger.

Behold, what I have seen to be good and fitting is to eat and drink and find enjoyment in all the toil with which one toils under the sun the few days of his life that God has given him, for this is his lot. Everyone also to whom God has given wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Hebrews 4:1–16

R: Therefore, while the promise of entering His rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as He has said,

“As I swore in My wrath,
‘They shall not enter My rest,’”

although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works.” And again in this passage He said,

“They shall not enter My rest.”

Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again He appoints a certain day, “Today,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted,

“Today, if you hear His voice,
do not harden Your hearts.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from His.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia and Verse: (p. 205)

Holy Gospel: Mark 10:23–31

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10th chapter

C: **Glory to You, O Lord**

P: Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How difficult it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus said to them again, “Children, how difficult it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to Him, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” Peter began to say to Him, “See, we have left everything and followed You.” Jesus said, “Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for My sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Nicene Creed

Sermon Hymn: “*When Aimless Violence Takes Those We Love*”- **Hymn #764**

Sermon: “*Who Are We?*” - **Ecclesiastes 5:10–20**

Who are we? To an animal that doesn't matter. A dog goes about sniffing this and that. A squirrel dashes up and down trees gathering food. A fish swims in the water without even knowing what water is. But we humans are not satisfied just existing and doing business. We

want to know where we came from and where we are going, why we are here,--just exactly who we are!

In the sciences we are told to use “natural” explanations. So scientists the question, “Who are we?” according to what they see in nature. To biologists we are animals that have evolved from other lower forms of animals. We may think that we are special, but that is only from our own perspective. A roach may not do the things we do, but if there ever were a nuclear holocaust, humans could become extinct while roaches would live on. To chemists we are a collection of chemicals that may be more complex than what other animals have, but we are just here by chance. To physicists we are actually like holograms projected into space by 2-D layers of information on the edge of space.

But does that satisfy us? We’d like to think we are more important, more significant than that. Yet listen to what Ecclesiastes says. In the original Hebrew the title of the book is “The Preacher.” This is what the “Preacher” says: “As a man comes, so he departs, and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?” How many of us know the names of our great grandparents? How about the names of their parents? How well will we be remembered by our great-grandchildren? By their children? In light of that who are we?

In Eastern religions like Buddhism and Hinduism you learn to just accept life as it is. You come from the universe and will go back to it. Life and death are just cycles that will go on until you get released from those cycles and are one with the universe forever. So historically in those cultures you just accepted how thousands would die each year from famine, flood, drought, and earthquakes.

In our culture we don’t accept death and the seeming senselessness of life, so we tend to ignore death. We keep ourselves busy with life and don’t stop to think about it. We contact friends by Facebook and texting, work to earn a decent paycheck, take up hobbies and video games to take up our free time, and enjoy the things in life. If that is too shallow, then we can get involved in good causes and make good memories with the people in our lives. But still in the end, who are we? You can avoid that question as a busy college student or even a busy working person, or a heavily scheduled, active retiree. But eventually we have to deal with “the Preacher’s” dilemma: “Naked a man comes out from his mother’s womb, and as he comes out, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hand.”

The “Preacher’s” answer to the problem is to say, “Man seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart.”

Does this mean God just keeps us satisfied in this life so we don’t stop to think about who we are and where we are headed? Karl Marx called religion, “the opiate of the masses,” like a drug that keeps people happy so they don’t deal with the truth.

That is hardly the case when we consider where God has left us. God made this world to click, to work just right. But our sin messes things up. God holds in check that sin, which

messes things up, and keeps it from destroying this world and us. But still He allows things to be messed up. Why does He do that? So that we are not satisfied with the way things are. We don't want to die. Death is not something we just ignore. Death is what stares in front of us and says, "Life as you have it is not good. It is messed up. You need another way!"

Blaise Pascal was a great mathematician, but even more a devout Christian. He observed human life and concluded that Christianity must be true because it alone truly emphasized the real human condition. The Bible shows why we got here in the first place and the greatness we have because we are created in God's image. It is not conceited to see that there is something special about humans, not because we have done anything, but by what God made us to be in creation. Then God's Word shows us how that greatness got screwed up and corrupted by the fall into sin. God's Word shows us that so great is that corruption, that our efforts will not fix it. As the "Preacher" says, "As a man comes, so he departs; and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind? All his days he eats in darkness, with great frustrations, affliction, and anger." But most of all in God's Word we have the only real hope for our human condition—Jesus Christ. When the "Preacher" says, "God gives any man wealth and possessions and another time to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in it—this is a gift from God," he means that the key is God in our lives. Jesus is God coming to us in our existence as human beings to give meaning and hope to our lives. There is now a "why" in our lives to answer the question, "Who are we?" God made us to be His people.

And in Jesus we see that what is hopeless and impossible for us humans—to defeat death and hopelessness—is now ours in Him. God made us in the first place—and what we read about what God created in Genesis is, "That God saw it, and it was good." We can add to that, "Not only did God make us; He died for us. We are really worth something. We are God's!"

John Newton wrote the hymn, "Amazing Grace," He had been a slave trader until Christ changed his life. He became dedicated to putting an end to slavery along with his friend, fellow Christian and Member of Parliament, William Wilberforce, who came up with the law that abolished slavery in the British Empire in 1833 and paved the way for abolition in this country.

John Meyer is a former member of this congregation who was critically injured on his bike when a car hit him. His vital organs and brain are okay, but with a severed spine he will probably never walk again. But a few days after the accident as his wife and a nurse were talking to him to assure him, he mentioned the teenage girl whose car hit him and showed concern for her, not himself.

A woman lies in a hospice bed, knowing that she is going to die. But when you see her she smiles, she is at peace because she knows that even death cannot separate her from her Savior.

That is what happens when we see that we belong to God. We have a definite goal and purpose in life—to live for God by loving other people.

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

P: It is truly good, right, and proper. . .

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

(Pastor)

C: Amen.

Lord's Prayer, The Words of our Lord, and Pax Domini (*The Peace of the Lord*): p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*): p.210

Distribution Hymn: "*Forgive Us, Lord, for Shallow Thankfulness*" - **Hymn #788**
"*What Is the World to Me*" - **Hymn #730**

Dismissal

Nunc Dimittis:(*Song of Simeon*) p. 211

Prayer After Communion:

(Pastor)

C: Amen.

Benedicamus ("Let Us Bless"), **and Benediction** (Blessing):
p. 212

Closing Hymn: "*We Give Thee But Thine Own*" - **Hymn #781**

Postlude