

Order of Worship for 9/4/22

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus”* – Hymn #685

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: "As I live," says the Lord, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from their ways, and live."

C: The Lord God seeks to bless us.

P: Let us therefore make confession of our sins, attentive to the gracious word of our God.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we have sinned against you in our thinking, our speaking, and our doing. We deserve Your wrath and punishment. It is only for the sake of Your obedient Son, Jesus Christ, that we dare to ask for your forgiveness.

P: God was pleased to reconcile all things to Himself by the sacrifice of the cross. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen. Thanks be to God!

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: Make me understand the way of Your precepts,

C: and I will meditate on Your wondrous works.

P: My soul melts away for sorrow;

C: strengthen me according to Your word!

P: Put false ways far from me

C: and graciously teach me Your law!

P: I have chosen the way of faithfulness;

C: I set Your just decrees before me.

P: I cling to Your testimonies, O Lord;

C: let me not be put to shame!

P: I will run in the way of Your commandments

C: when You enlarge my heart!

**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: Make me understand the way of Your precepts,
C: and I will meditate on Your wondrous works.

Prayer of the Day:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray. O merciful Lord, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all. Grant us courage and strength to take up the cross and follow Him, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *“Glory to God, We Give You Thanks and Praise”* – **Hymn #946**

Old Testament Lesson Deuteronomy 30:15–20

R: “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you today, by loving the LORD your God, by walking in His ways, and by keeping His commandments and His statutes and His just decrees, then you shall live and multiply, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to take possession of it. But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today, that you shall surely perish. You shall not live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying His voice and holding fast to Him, for He is your life and length of days, that you may dwell in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Philemon 1–21

R: Paul, a prisoner for Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved fellow worker and Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier, and the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always when I remember you in my prayers, because I hear of your love and of the faith that you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you. Accordingly, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do what is required, yet for love’s sake I prefer to appeal to you—I, Paul, an old man and now a prisoner also for Christ Jesus— I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. (Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me.) I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart. I would have been glad to keep him with me, in order that he might serve me on your behalf during my imprisonment for the Gospel, but I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness

might not be by compulsion but of your own free will. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 14:25–35

P: The Holy Gospel according to St Luke, the fourteenth chapter.

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: Now great crowds accompanied [Jesus], and He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

P: This is Gospel of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sermon Hymn: “*Come, Follow Me*” - Hymn #688

Sermon: “*Counting the Cost*” - Luke 14:25-35

They say there are only two things that we cannot escape—death and taxes. For many now we can add to that inflation. After having to isolate during the pandemic, many workers were glad to get back to the office and work places. But this summer many changed their mind and preferred to work from home to avoid the cost of commuting with the highest gas prices ever. This also has affected the whole trucking business where the past profits have been lost to fuel prices—so adds to the supply chain problems we have had. Many others have asked whether or not it is worth it to work and be stressed when with some cuts in their lives they find that they can retire earlier or find other means of making income. This summer local swimming pools were closed many hours when kids could be enjoying the exercise and diversion from the heat because young people who would otherwise serve as lifeguards did not think it was worth the cost of being out in the heat and humidity to do that work. The people who do so much of

the hard labor in our society are immigrants because most of us don't think it is worth the cost of doing that hard work.

Jesus calls our attention to the cost of following Him. He uses two stories to illustrate His point. The first is about a man who wants to build a tower. Before he starts, he needs to make sure he can pay to complete it. Otherwise if he starts and has to stop before finishing, he will look like a fool. The other story is about a king who is about to go to war. When he realizes that his enemy outnumbers him, he decides to negotiate a peaceful settlement. In the same way, Jesus says, before we follow Him, we must consider what it will cost. Can we afford it?

At first glance it may seem like Jesus is making much over nothing. Doesn't the Bible tell us that whoever believes in Jesus will have eternal life? Jesus did all the work. All we have to do is say "Yes" to Him. How costly is that? That seems like the greatest bargain of all time.

But what does it really mean to be "saved"? It doesn't just mean we will go to heaven. It means that we follow Jesus. Heaven would not be heaven without Jesus. Jesus was talking to people that were traveling with Him. Many of them would discover the cost of following Him. Many would be cut-off from their Jewish relatives because they followed Jesus. Some, like the disciples, would be killed because they trusted in Jesus. People today discover the cost of following Jesus. For many Sudanese it means that they are cut-off from their Moslem families, forced to flee their homeland, and become refugees. For Chinese Christians it means they can't get government jobs they deserve because the Communist government won't allow Christians to hold those positions. For Indian Christians it may mean that their house is burnt down by Hindu extremists.

What does it cost for you and me—an hour less sleep on a Sunday morning? But it can also cause tensions with a roommate because you don't think it is right to have a boy or girlfriend spend the night in your room. Or it could put you at odds with the guys in your Greek house or dorm floor because you don't drink with them. Or it means that you hold back on marrying someone you are really attracted to because he or she doesn't share your faith. Or it means that you don't make that lucrative business deal because you know it isn't completely ethical. If we look honestly, as Jesus is telling us to do, it does cost to follow Him. But how much does it cost?

Jesus puts it these terms: "Anyone who does not carry His cross and follow me cannot be My disciple." A cross meant something specific to people in Jesus' day. When we look at what Jesus is really asking of us, then the cost gets higher and higher. In fact, it is a cost we cannot pay.

But Jesus paid the price. He looked ahead and saw what lay ahead of Him. On the cross He would not only suffer that cruel death, He would also carry all the guilt of the world on His shoulders on Mount Calvary. He paid the highest price for you and me.

Now we can take up the cross and follow Him, not to pay the price, but to hold to Him as each day He leads us. When we see what the cross cost to Jesus, then we are willing to let go of everything else to follow Him.

Dave Reichert was the King County Sheriff in the state of Washington. On August 12, 1982 as a young detective he was put on the case to investigate the death of Debra Lynn Bonner, whose body was pulled from a murky river in Kent, Washington. For the next twenty years he continued to investigate that death and many others involving bodies discovered in the Green River. Finally in 2001 DNA evidence linked Gary Ridgway to the Green River murders. Ridgway's arrest and confession a year later were, according to Reichert, "What I had been praying for my whole career." He thought, if anyone deserved the fires of hell, it was Ridgway.

During Sunday Bible class Reichert's pastor led a study of Psalm 32. It begins, "Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered." He asked, "Whose sins did Jesus pay the price for on the cross?" Then he asked, "Is there forgiveness for Gary Ridgway?"

That thought stuck with Reichert. Jesus paid the price to forgive all of us. After being involved in many interviews with Ridgway as a sheriff, he asked Ridgway's attorneys for another chance to visit with him. He shared with Ridgway his concern. "I don't like what you did, but my faith tells me that I don't want anybody to go to hell. I don't even want *you* to go to hell. And neither does Jesus." The sheriff was shocked when Ridgway responded by crying. Ridgway pulled out a piece of paper. On it was a prayer he had been praying every day, admitting his sins and asking God for forgiveness. Later one of Ridgway's attorneys told Reichert that she could not believe the change in her client after that visit.

Can we pay the price? How much does it cost? We look at the cross and see what Jesus did for us. He paid the price for Gary Ridgway and for you and me. Then we can follow Him as we are willing to lie aside anything that would keep us from Him, and we will share His "costly" forgiveness with others.

Creed:

Prayer of the Church

Offering & Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

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

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

The Words of Our Lord

Lord's Prayer

Distribution: *"Lord of Glory"* – **Hymn #851**

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" – **Hymn #425**

Prayer After Communion:

P: Almighty and eternal God, You know our problems and our weaknesses better than we ourselves. In your love and by Your power help us in our confusion, and in spite of our weakness, make us firm in faith, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *"Seek Ye First"* - **Hymn #712**

Postlude