

Order of Worship for October 29, 2023

On this anniversary of the Reformation our worship this morning is based on the German Mass Martin Luther used to put worship into the language of the people and uses hymns in places of chanted places. All our hymn texts this morning were written or translated by Luther.

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word” - Hymn #655

Invocation

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

C: **Amen.**

The Confession: (based on Luther’s Hymn) spoken

All: To Thee, omniscient Lord of all, in grief and shame I humbly call; I see my sins against Thee, Lord, the sins of thought and deed and word. They press me sore; I cry to Thee: O God, be merciful to me! My Lord, my God to Thee I pray; O cast me not in wrath away! Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart, but let Him draw to Thee my heart that truly penitent I be: O God, be merciful to me! O Jesus, let Thy precious blood be to my soul a cleansing flood. Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest away, but grant that justified I may go to my house, at peace with Thee: O God, be merciful to me!

Forgiveness

P: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

Entrance Psalm:

P: I will speak of your testimonies before kings, O LORD,

C: **and shall not be put to shame.**

P: God is our refuge and strength,

C: **an ever present help in time of need.**

P: Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way

C: **And the mountains fall into the midst of the sea.**

P: The LORD Almighty is with us.

C: **The God of Jacob is our refuge.**

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: I will speak of your testimonies before kings, O LORD,

C: **and shall not be put to shame.**

Kyrie Hymn “Kyrie! God, Father” - Hymn #942

(the choir group sings first, the choir joins in with the second “Kyrie,” and the congregations joins in with the third “Kyrie.”)

Gloria Hymn: “All Glory be to God Alone” – Hymn #948

Old Testament Lesson-Jeremiah 31:31-34

R: "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

R: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson-Romans 3:19-28

R: Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in His sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an atoning sacrifice by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God

Gradual Hymn: “To God, the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray” – Hymn #768, verse 1

Holy Gospel-John 8:31-36

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 8th chapter:

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains

forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

Hymn of the Day: “*A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*” – **Hymn #656**

Sermon: “*Working’ for God*” Matthew 22

Some American business owners and managers hold a dismal view of Gen Z workers according to a Resume Builder survey of 1,344 people in managerial positions about workers born 1997 and later. Almost half (49%) of respondents declared it difficult to work with Gen Z “all or most of the time,” while a staggering 79% said they find them the most difficult generation to have in the workplace. Of that majority, 59% said that they’ve had to fire a Gen Z employee and 20% even claimed to have axed one of the young workers within a week of their start date. Managers and owners commonly cited entitlement and a lack of effort, motivation and productivity as reasons why they were given the boot.

The survey did state:

Compared to other generations, Gen Zers are found to be highly innovative, and adaptable. They are not afraid to challenge the status quo and bring new ideas to the table. They also value authenticity and transparency and expect companies to be socially responsible and ethical.

Yet, this is a tough time for young workers. In 2019 21% of Generation Z and 18% of Millennials said they were very satisfied with their jobs. This improved by 2023 to 34% of Generation Z and 31% of Millennials. In 2023 35% were very worried about the high cost of living, 51% said they lived from paycheck to paycheck, and 46% said that they had to have an extra job to make ends meet. They are more likely to work independently and less likely to expect to retire and own a house. They are more likely to report factors that impact the effectiveness of their work. Over half of them will either be diagnosed or treated for mental illness.

How do we view work? The Greek philosopher spoke about “instrumental” and “intrinsic” work. “Instrumental” work was work that accomplished what was need to survive—growing crops, preparing food and clothing. This was work for slaves. Only free thinkers did “intrinsic” work, work that lasted and wasn’t just for daily survival.

That attitude affected how people in the Middle Ages viewed work. The regular laborers who were serfs did the “instrumental” work, and the “intrinsic” work was done by church people. That is why so many ended up in monasteries.

Today we celebrate the Reformation. One of the great teachings of Luther and the Reformers was what is called “vocation,” the Latin word for “calling.” The “intrinsic” value of work did not come from the type of work done, but that it is directed to God. “Instrumental”

work like grave digging, garbage removal, and milking cows is just as valuable to God as what churchmen do. What gives value to our work is that it is for God. It is like the pictures that kids draw for their mothers. It doesn't matter how artistic the drawing is. When it is done in love for the mother, to her it is a masterpiece that deserves to be on her gallery on the refrigerator.

That is what Jesus summarizes so well in His answer to what is the greatest commandment. He says first, "Love the Lord, your God," then "Love your neighbor." We love God because He first loved us and sent His Son, Jesus, to die for us. The result is that we want to love Him. And how do we do that? By loving others. Our whole existence, not just our work, is about loving God by loving our neighbors. Work is just a means to do that.

The Industrial Revolution changed perceptions of work. The "intrinsic" value of work became more "instrumental." What mattered is how much profit the work produced. In our own culture the mass industrialization caused by the World Wars and the reaction to the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik caused a great emphasis in education of technology. "Intrinsic" work didn't matter, just what could produce "real," "instrumental" things. That meant that doing things for God would take a backseat to things that are "real."

But our recent technology has changed that. More and more work involves not producing "real," "physical" things but information and the "virtual." The "instrumental" work that the farmers and milkmaids did in Luther's time is done by machines, not people. So what value is there in so much work that is not "real," except for the money we earn?

One writer expressing it this way:

Here is the history of work in six words: From jobs to careers to callings. Until quite recently, we had little concept of "progress" in our labor. Around the world, people hunted or harvested, just as their parents and grandparents had. They hammered nails. They assembled gears and sewed thread and patched homes. Their work was a matter of subsistence and necessity; it was not a race for status or an existential search for meaning. These were jobs. And for hundreds of millions of people everywhere, work is still work—grueling or boring or exploited or poorly paid, or all of the above.

People like that could find value in work but simply knowing that they provided for their families—they brought home the bacon. But in our world today people are left demoralized if that is all there is to work. Generations born before World War 2 could be satisfied with providing for their families. That is a big deal for those who experienced the Depression. Baby Boomers first sought fulfillment in their work beyond that—that they were doing something "significant." But cynicism led that to turn into the driving force for work being profit. Now younger generations seek fulfillment in work, but not at the cost of taking away time from family and recreation.

The problem is deeper than generations. We may picture the Garden of Eden as a place where people did no work. But God did not curse humans after they sinned by

saying now they had to work. Instead the curse from God was that the work would not be fulfilling. It would often seem frustrating and senseless.

The Nazis made concentration inmates do hard work. But they noticed that as the inmates accomplished things, their morale improved. Making their work harder did not change things. Then the Nazis changed the nature of their work. They had them dig trenches one day; then fill them up the next. The work itself was no harder, but it crushed the morale of the inmates because it was so senseless.

For Luther vocations are “masks of God.” On the surface, we see an ordinary human face — our mother, the doctor, the teacher, the waitress, our pastor — but, beneath the appearances, God is ministering to us through them. God is hidden in human vocations. Work is not a curse; it is a gift from God. What makes it a curse is sin that turns it into drudgery. The only true fulfillment in work is in seeing it through faith as our “calling,” part of something bigger and everlasting.

Jesus summed up God’s law: “Love God; love your neighbor.” Jesus will tell us on that last day, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did it unto Me.” That is our purpose in life. That is what gives fulfillment.

Creed Hymn: “*We All Believe in One True God*” – **Hymn #954** (choir sings first verse)

Prayers

P: Lord, in Your mercy...

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing our Ministry

Offering and Voluntary

Admonition to Communicants (Pastor)

Sanctus Hymn: “*Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old*” – **Hymn #960**

Words of our Lord (Pastor)

Lord’s Prayer

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p.198

Distribution Hymns:

Memorial Choir Anthem

“O Lord, We Praise Thee” – **Hymn #617**

“Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior” – **Hymn #627**

Dismissal

Prayer after Communion (Pastor)

C: Amen

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Grant Peace, We Pray, in Mercy, Lord”* – **Hymn #777**

Postlude