

Order of Worship for 10-27-24 (Reformation Sunday)

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

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

Confession and Forgiveness: p 213

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.

Hymn: “Kyrie! God Father” - Hymn #942 (soloist, then choir, then all)

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

Prayer of the Day:

P: Let us pray... Almighty and gracious Lord, pour out Your Holy Spirit on Your faithful people. Keep us steadfast in Your grace and truth, protect and deliver us in times of temptation, defend us against all enemies, and grant to Your Church Your saving peace; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The 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.

The 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 revealed 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

Alleluia Hymn: "*Alleluia! Let Praises Ring*" – **Hymn #822 verse 1**

The 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: "*A Desire for God*" - **Hebrews 10**

Procrastination is a side effect of the way we value things; it frames task completion as a product of motivation, rather than ability. We can see that very much in the case of getting homework done. It can take a lot of motivation to do something that we hate doing and may not

do well. But it is more than that. We can be really good at something, whether it's cooking a gourmet meal or writing a story, but if we don't possess the motivation, or sense of importance, to complete the task, it'll likely be put off.

Writer Robert Hanks calls it “a Failure of appetites.” The source of this “appetite” can be a bit tricky. But one could argue that, like our (real) appetite for food, it's something that's closely intertwined with our daily lives, our culture and our sense of who we are. So how do you increase that “appetite”?

A powerful way is to connect the project to your self-concept. That can happen when you “identify sufficiently with your future self.” Connecting the project to more immediate sources of value, such as life goals or core values, can fill the deficit in subjective value that underlies procrastination. For instance it can be a lot harder to get up and go to class than to go to work. Missing classes may or may not affect our grades. But missing work can mean less in the paycheck. People with serious illnesses see the future in a different way than the rest of us. They have more motivation to appreciate little joys.

But what about an “appetite” for God? There is less and less motivation for people to go to church, not only because you don't have family or friends going or that there are other things to do on a Sunday morning or Saturday afternoon, but because it seems to fit less in our future goals. People die, but don't do it in front of our faces like they did when we didn't have modern medicine or when your country was the center of a war or famine or epidemic. We go on in our lives not having to think about it, but instead live for other things like good jobs, healthy families, and our recreation.

The writer of Hebrews was living in a world where the “appetite” for God was affected not by distractions, but by persecution. Hebrews, as its name implies, was written to Jews, specifically Jewish Christians. What they were facing was persecution as Christians. In the Roman Empire Judaism was a legal religion. The first Christians, like Jesus' disciples, were Jews. So Christianity was seen as a sect of Judaism and had legal status. But as it gained more and more Gentile members, it was seen as a separate religion, an illegal religion. There was great temptation among Jewish Christians to fall back into Judaism to avoid persecution. To warn them the author of Hebrews writes:

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. For, “In just a little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay.” And, “But My righteous one will live by faith. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.” But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

The first quote is from Isaiah 26. The second is from Habakkuk 2. It is more familiar in the way Paul quotes it in Romans 1—“The just shall live by faith.” We may recognize those words as what triggered the Reformation that Martin Luther started. We live, not because of doing many good works, but by faith in what God has done for us in Jesus. To emphasize that Luther translated Romans 1—“The just shall live by faith alone.”

It can be easy to see that as the cheap way to get in. Just believe, and you will be saved. Do whatever you want; as long as you believe it will turn out.

But Luther's problem wasn't that he could not see that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins. The problem for him was, "If I am forgiven, how can I go on sinning?" The problem wasn't becoming a Christian, but staying one.

For Luther that dilemma was caused not by not having an "appetite" for God, but "eating the wrong food"—thinking that God holds on to us only because we are good enough. For the people in the book of Hebrews the problem was seeing the present persecution more readily than the eternal life we have in Christ. But for us so often the problem is not seeming to have any "appetite" for God. How can we have an "appetite" when we are so stuffed with other things? Listen to what Hebrews says:

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The first thing Hebrews points to is our Savior, Christ Jesus. The description Hebrews gives of Jesus as our High Priest is not just a story; it is exactly what happened. In the Old Testament the blood from the animal sacrifice was poured by the priest over the Ark of the Covenant in which were placed the Ten Commandments. God could look and see that the people had not kept the commandments, their covenant with Him. But the blood covered the Ark so that God did not see the sin. That was just symbolic of what Jesus did as both High Priest and sacrifice as He shed His blood on the cross, which covers us so that instead of God seeing our sin, He sees Jesus' sacrifice for us. When we focus on Jesus, we realize how great He can be in our lives. He gives us the appetite to want to center our lives on our eternal life with God and His people, then on our present desires.

The next thing Hebrews show is how Jesus can be more and more real to our lives—"Spurring one another on toward love and good deeds," "not giving up meeting together," and "encouraging one another"-- that describes what we are doing now and anytime we get together with others who share our faith in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews says about Jesus that He "made perfect those being made holy." How can someone be made perfect, then have to be made "holy?" Jesus cried out in His dying breath from the cross, "It is finished," which can also be translated, "It is perfect." By His sacrifice

Jesus covered all our sins. Though we still sin, that sin is forgiven by Jesus' blood. The "being made holy" refers now to how we grow in our relationship with God. "Holy" doesn't just mean "without sin." It means "set apart." The commands God gives us to follow His ways don't keep us perfect. We still sin. Our forgiveness depends solely on what Jesus did for us on the cross. That is what got Luther all messed up. But as forgiven people we can now act as people "set apart," as people of God. The salvation we have in Jesus moves, gives us "the appetite to not sit on our faith, but to live it out.

If someone saved your life, you would be so grateful to that person. But that gratefulness can wear out if you don't see that person anymore. Being with God's people, helps us to day after day see Jesus and what He has done for us. Then we have the "appetite," the desire for Him.

Creed Hymn: *"We All Believe in One True God"* - **Hymn # 954** (choir sings verse 1)

Prayers:

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering

Call to Communicants:

P: I exhort you in Christ that you give attention in true faith to the last will and testament Jesus gave on the night before He died, and that you take to heart the words which Christ Jesus presents His body and blood to us for forgiveness. Take note and give thanks for the boundless love the He showed us when He saved us from the wrath of God, sin, death, and hell, by His blood. Then externally receive the bread and wine, that is, His true body and blood, as a guarantee and pledge. Let us in His name, according to His command, and with His own words administer and receive this testament.

Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy) 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) Hymn: *"Lamb of God, Pure and Holy,"* - **Hymn #434 vs. 1**

Distribution of Holy Communion

Choir Anthem: "*Always and Forever*" by **Mark Hayes**

Distribution Hymns: "*O Lord, We Praise Thee*" - **Hymn #617**
 "*Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior*" - **Hymn #627**

Dismissal

Hymn After Communion: "*Grant Peace We Pray*" - **Hymn 777**

Blessing

(Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: "*God's Word Is Our Great Heritage*" - **Hymn #582**

Postlude