



Valley Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Dear Friend in Christ,

This Sunday we will continue our sermon series on the Lord's Prayer as we hear the word, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us".

A special blessing is that our ministerial candidate Eric Atcheson will share in the worship service. He will bring the message of forgiveness through his sermon "Sunflowers".

If you have not had the opportunity to join us for worship, I encourage you to do so this Sunday. The following phone numbers and links are the ones to dial between 10:15am and 10:30am. You can join in one of two ways:

By telephone (audio only)

1 (312) 626 6799

Meeting ID: 867 5713 3623

By video with computer, tablet, or smartphone – click the link below

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86757133623>

We are excited for the opportunity to have our spirits lifted with Eric sharing the word of God. May God bless him.

You are special to me.

God Bless You, Edd

Valley Christian Church

Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

June 28, 2020

PRELUDE

"Great is Thy Faithfulness"

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: In hope, we were saved. Hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?
People: We hope for what we do not see. We wait for it with patience.
Leader: The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought.
People: That very Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words.
Leader: God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit.
People: For the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

(Romans 8:24-27, New Revised Standard Version)

HYMN OF PRAISE

"How Great Thou Art"

*O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder
Thy power throughout the universe displayed*

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee
How great thou art, how great thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee
How great thou art, how great thou art*

*And when I think that God, His Son not sparing
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin*

*Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee
How great thou art, how great thou art
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee
How great thou art, how great thou art*

INVOCATION

Loving and forgiving God, you bless us with life and with a beautiful creation in which to live that life. But to live it in a way that is truly free, we need the blessing of your forgiveness. Be with us as we gather today to grow in faith, so that we might seek forgiveness from you and from each other. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:9-13

MEDITATION

"Sunflowers"

See Insert for Meditation

HYMN

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

*Come, thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing thy grace
Streams of mercy, never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it
Mount of thy redeeming love*

Here I raise to thee an altar

Hither by thy help I've come

And I hope, by thy good pleasure

Safely to arrive at home

Jesus sought me when I was a stranger

Wandering from the fold of God

He, to rescue me from danger

Interposed His precious blood

SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

We turn to you, O God, for your providence and care in these moments of need and necessity, that you might intercede through us, through the Holy Spirit, through your Word, through all the ways that only you know how. We ask that your holy presence be with the people we have named here aloud, with the people we hold in the silence of our souls, and with all your children, across your creation, as we come to you in prayer on their behalf. We pray for...

PASTORAL PRAYER

**CALL TO
COMMUNION**

The very act of partaking in holy communion is an affirmation that in Christ, there is forgiveness. It is what He says to the disciples over the cup as He blesses it, and it is what His death and resurrection make possible for each of us, every day, in our faith.

**COMMUNION
HYMN**

“Let Us Break Bread Together on Our Knees”

Let us break bread together on our knees

Let us break bread together on our knees

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun

O Lord, have mercy on me

Let us drink wine together on our knees

Let us drink wine together on our knees

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun

O Lord, have mercy on me

**COMMUNION
PRAYER**

Pray together the Lord’s Prayer

**HOLY
COMMUNION**

Partake of the holy communion
(Bread, juice or whatever is available to you)

**WORDS OF
INSTITUTION**

On the night before He died, Jesus broke bread with His disciples and said, “This is my body, broken for you.” He took the cup and said, “This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sin.”

**SHARING OUR
OFFERING
WITH GOD**

Share your church offering with the church by mail or bring it by the church office. Thank you for your love gifts.

**OFFERTORY
PRAYER**

Eternal God, please accept our freely given and sacrificial offerings to you as a token of our gratitude for your divine forgiveness.

BENEDICTION

May God send you out into this day as a sinner, called and redeemed, to call and redeem fellow sinners with the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

All things are possible with God

With
God
all things
are possible

Matthew 19:26

MEDITATION
Sunday, June 28, 2020

“Sunflowers”

It was only after I told both Ed(d)s that I would be happy to continue the Lord’s Prayer sermon series that I went and looked up which line of the prayer this Sunday would fall on, and, naturally, it’s the line that mentions sin—always a winning strategy for a candidate sermon! But this line is as much about the importance of forgiveness as it is the pervasiveness of sin, and we can’t have the forgiveness without the sin, just like we can’t have the empty tomb of Easter without the cross of Good Friday. So, lets talk about these soul-sized things, sin and forgiveness, together for a bit today.

I include the empty tomb and cross imagery here on purpose, because the cross is at the core of Christian belief around atonement for sin. The Crucifixion was an act of preventable, senseless violence. The Roman Empire did not need to crucify its criminals; it chose to because they believed that doing so served their imperial aims. And Jesus did not have to be sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate; as prefect of Judea he wielded immense power and could have used it however he wished.

And yet, the Crucifixion happened. It happened not only through personal, individual responsibility (in the case of Pilate), but through collective, social responsibility (in the case of the entirety of the Roman Empire). So it must have been for some purpose. Or, perhaps, for two interrelated purposes. First, the Crucifixion takes place because we are sinful. We as humans have, ever since the Tower of Babel story that Pastor Edd and I both preached on for Pentecost Sunday four weeks ago, tried to create and order systems in ways that elevate our own hubris and short-sightedness, and empire is one of those systems. People were not made by God to

(over)

be ruled over with the iron fists of Caesars and slavers, people were made by God to live side-by-side in liberty and in liberation.

And therein lies the second intertwined purpose of the cross. If we crucified Jesus because we are sinful, we need liberation from that sinfulness. And that is where the forgiveness part comes into focus, because the Resurrection was an act of profound forgiveness. After we killed God’s Son, God gives that Son right back to us three days later. In the Resurrection, life’s victory over death is made complete, but so is God’s victory over sin. God is giving us a way forward from being ruled by sin.

To atone and receive forgiveness for sins can take place either individually or collectively. As an individual person, if I wrong you personally, I am expected to atone for hurting you and seek forgiveness. It is up to you to offer it; forgiveness is the sort of thing that cannot be demanded. And that entire process can take place privately—indeed, many times, it is far healthier that it does. It can help that individual relationship move forward in a safe atmosphere of mutuality, privacy, and trust.

So seeking forgiveness and reconciliation may or may not feel so dramatic in our individual lives. It very well might to you, depending on what you are seeking forgiveness for or are offering forgiveness for. But it doesn’t have to be. Forgiveness can be something private and low-key, just as it can also be dramatic or public. Either way, the church has an incredibly important role to play in both teaching and demonstrating the good fruits of seeking forgiveness. And you are listening to me preach to you today in the hope that you might also feel the Holy Spirit leading you towards having me do ministry alongside you, just as I feel the Holy Spirit leading me to you in Birmingham.