

Script Worship Resources - *Coming In Second*

Easter 6, Year B,

9th May, 2021

Psalm 107:1-9, 43 NIV / Colossians 3:12-17 CEV

Prelude

God, Who Stretched,

Played by Annie Center,

<https://youtu.be/ucxFpa9rP3o>

Intro / Call to Worship

Since God chose you to be the holy people He loves, be full of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowances for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Didn't the Lord forgive you? You must do the same. More than anything else, love. Love binds us together in perfect harmony. Let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. We are called to live in peace and be thankful.

I'm glad to welcome you to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We seek to welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

As we gather today, on this day when we recognize those who have played a maternal role in our lives, let's reflect on what influence those people have played, as well as the mothering God we worship, as we listen to Annie play "Ave Maria."

Reflection Video

Ave Maria,

played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/rYQpLt0-Fxg>

Invocation

God,
We are bound together and clothed with Your compassion, so that we may relate to those carrying heavy burdens. We are clothed with kindness to spread throughout your kingdom. We are clothed with humility that allows us to let go of our pride and focus on following your purpose for our lives. We are clothed with patience to avoid missing your many blessings. Above all else, we are clothed with your unconditional love. Let us know that love and use it to guide our lives. Yes, we are bound together, clothed in Christ! Amen.

We light a candle today to represent the Spirit burning within us, and among us, guiding our time together. (light candle) Amen.

In words from the Psalmist today, we hear of the promise our God offers, to deliver us from trouble and provide for our needs. As we listen to this scripture, let's reflect on how we have been cared for in our lives, and how we have been delivered to where we are today.

Psalm of the Day Psalm 107:1-9, 43 NIV

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.[a]

Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle.

They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away.

Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind,

for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the Lord.

Scripture Video *Psalm 107 NIV Audio Bible,*

from NIV Audio Bible by Zondervan,
posted to YouTube by Ryan Morgan

<https://youtu.be/awnfNFo0IB0>

A Time of Prayer

Today we come together as a community to share together our joys and concerns, and lift them to God in prayer. If you would like to share a specific request to be included in our communal prayer time, please leave a comment in the video below, or email myself at: vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I'll make sure to include that request in next week's service, as well as send a prayer chain email, if you would like.

Joys and Concerns

This morning let's remember Bill and JoAnn Shoemaker, as Bill transitioned to Assisted Living on Friday. May God grant him strength and comfort in a transition he was not looking forward to, and may God continue to strengthen and heal JoAnn as she tries to support him from a distance.

Let's also keep Matthew Schultz in our prayers as he recovers from a Covid infection.

Today let's also remember those for whom Mother's Day is not a happy occasion and may they find comfort.

Let's bring these concerns and others in our lives to God together in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

God of enduring love When our steps in life our unsure, When the way to go is unclear, Guide our path

God of enduring love When life throws us curveballs, When things look bleak, Strengthen us.

God of enduring love When we find ourselves surrounded by too much stuff, When we want more and more to satisfy us, Draw our hearts to you.

God of enduring love When we lost our hope, When we grieved and grieved some more, Hold us in your arms.

God of enduring love When we are drowning in a sea of debt, When we are overwhelmed by the tasks of work and life, Lift us up into your hands of love. Amen

In our Epistle reading this morning, Paul reminds us that our faith walk is a communal one, that we are all parts of one body. As we hear these words from Colossians, let's reflect on our own perspective, and think about how we may think more as a body, and less as an individual.

Epistle reading Colossians 3:12-17 CEV

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek, and patient.

Put up with each other, and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you.

Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful.

Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

Scripture Video **Colossians 3:12-17**
Living In Peace Through Jesus' Love
Bible reading for Mothering Sunday

<https://youtu.be/u3ENH7MH4Is>

Message ***Coming In Second***

So, when you think about putting on new clothes, what's the first thing you need to do? Assuming that you are already wearing older clothes, the first thing you would need to do would be to strip off what you already have on. After all, you can't wear layer upon layer of clothes, at least not comfortably, or easily. Though as Pacific Northwesterners, we certainly know the value of being layered, especially in the ridiculously damp cold winter. But in the course of our normal lives, we put on new clothes to replace older clothes that are no longer working for us. They may be worn out and not accomplishing their function anymore. They might be out of style, or no longer representative of the image we want to portray.

There's quite a difference between the clothes I wear now and the clothes I wore 30 years ago. But then again, in some respects, I'm also quite a different person than I was back then. Gone are the days of cut off Metallica tee shirts and camo vests. I put the worn out work boots away in favor of more sensible footwear. As my personality and values evolved, so did my wardrobe. We tend to dress and appear in ways that reflect our personality, our sense of who we are. In fact, it is not only our clothing choices that reflect this. Even our choice in pets can reflect our personality.

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego recently came out with a study showing that, supposedly, people and their dogs often look alike. In the study, a panel of

judges was able to match 16 out of 25 purebred dogs with their owners. The reason for this, researchers say, is because dog owners tend to choose a pet that bears their resemblance in some way. The study identified similarities between pets and people such as physical characteristics or personality traits or both. According to the study, happy, outgoing, and affectionate dogs tend to be owned by warm and friendly people. Grumpy, snarly, pop-eyed, pug-nosed pooches tend to ... well you get the idea. When the Chicago Sun-Times ran this story, they included pictures of several people and their dogs. It's said that Actress Fran Drescher's dog, Chester, has a similar hair-do as its owner; and a picture of J. Edgar Hoover with his boxer were eerily similar.

The Apostle Paul in our epistle reading this morning is writing to a new church—a group of Christians. He's writing to folks who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior. And he instructs them to "Take off the old human nature with its practices and put on the new nature, which is renewed in knowledge by conforming to the image of the one who created it." He likens it to taking off the old clothes that they have always worn, and putting on the clothes of Christ as they step into a new life with him.

But what exactly does putting on the clothes of Christ look like? Well, in the preceding verses to today's reading, Paul goes through several lists of vices that we are to strip off: vices that make our focus on ourselves and not others; vices that cause us to act in negative and hurtful ways towards others; vices that divide the community instead of strengthening it. The old clothes we take off are the garments that we wore as part of worldly culture. They bear testament to a personality based on getting ahead, in fact, of winning at all costs. The values they lift up are greed and selfishness, putting one's needs above the needs of others, and the willingness to lie and deceive others to achieve our own personal goals, in whatever arena we interact with others in. When we wore those clothes, we didn't think anything of it. That's what most of the people around us wore. We were fitting in with the crowd, wearing the "cool hip" styles of the day. It can be truly amazing how similar the struggles can be between the people of Paul's day and our own.

In Paul's time, there was a lot of inequality and injustice built into the cultural fabric. People were stratified into different classes. It became harder and harder to get ahead. The rich were obsessed with getting richer, and the poor found it harder and harder to make ends meet, all the while the government became more and more corrupt. Kinda sounds familiar doesn't it?

So how is Paul telling this new Christian community in Colossae to react? He's telling them to step into this faith they've come to embrace. He's making the point that the Christian walk inherently contradicts the values of the culture around them. In both his letters to the Colossians and the Ephesians, he stresses the need to follow in Christ's footsteps, to

emulate the incarnation of Jesus. Through baptism, we die to our old life, and rise to new life in Christ. We live new lives that are markedly different from the way we lived before. He tells us what those new lives look like, what they're based on, what our new wardrobe consists of: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness or meekness and patience, forbearance and forgiveness, with love tying all of it together. Based on what we know of Jesus and his teachings, it makes a lot of sense right? But how easy is it to put those clothes on? And how well do they fit us? It can be easy to praise such high values, but how successful are we in living them?

There's the story of a seminary professor who taught the Christian graces of love and forbearance for forty years until he retired. Occupying himself in his retirement years, he poured a new concrete driveway to his house. Finished, he went in to rest and get a glass of ice tea. Returning later to view his proud achievement, he discovered that the neighborhood kids were putting their footprints all in the wet concrete. The angry professor chased the kids down in a rage and beat the tar out of the ones he could catch. Hearing the commotion, the professor's wife rushed into the yard, saw the angry professor thrashing the kids, and began to reprimand him: "What a shame," she said. "For forty years you have taught love, forgiveness and forbearance. Now look at you. You've lost your testimony." To which he replied: "That was all in the abstract. This is in the concrete."

But how do we handle the conflict between what our society values and the ethics taught and modeled by Jesus? It is not easy to step away from the drive to succeed so ingrained in our society, at least to succeed in the way success is defined by culture. We're told we need to work hard and strive to get ahead, to achieve all we can achieve. We need to climb that corporate ladder and seek those promotions. The better paycheck is always the bigger paycheck. The newer car is always the nicer car. The bigger house is always the better house. But what is the real cost of that choice?

In a competitive world, in order for you to be a winner, somebody else has to be a loser. For you to have the coolest and best stuff, somebody else makes do with less, or no stuff at all. To wear the wardrobe Paul is suggesting is not an easy fit at first. It means being satisfied with second place, of not being first, of not being the winner of what the world defines as the big prize. In Paul's time as well as our own, unfortunately, the concept of humility and meekness, or gentleness, depending on the translation you are using, are viewed as weaknesses, of being traits of losers, not winners. Yet the Greek word that is translated as meek or gentle, actually literally translates as "controlled strength." It's the same root word that's translated in reference to the donkey colt in Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. It's representative of a wild steed that's been broken, but still retains all its strength. In the same way we show our strength by being content not to be the winner, to being satisfied in

second. It's in ensuring that we finish the race together, without losers, that we exhibit that strength.

The point that is central to Paul's letter to the new community at Colossae was that the community takes precedence over the individual, at least as far as success is defined. But he stresses that it's through our own work on ourselves as individuals, that the community succeeds. By shedding the old clothes of an inequitable and unjust system, and the selfish and harmful values that system uplifts, we find ourselves in new clothes that promote unity through love, and compassion and kindness to others, putting others interests before our own.

As Jesus tells us in Mark's Gospel, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all." That's a pretty tall order in a culture that lifts up the notion of the rugged individual, that praises independent success and achievement. The choice we have is whether we follow the example of Jesus and take his lessons to heart, or as so often happens these days, yet again make Jesus fit into our culture, instead of working to change culture to fit Jesus. Which wardrobe will you choose to put on? Choose wisely. Amen.

Call to Serve.

We look around at the bounty of God's creation and give thanks. All that we have and all that we are is a gift from the author of generosity. May we be as generous, that the work of this ministry will be a blessing to others.

As we continue to seek to be a place of compassion and support to our community, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry that seeks to promote the growth of God's shalom around us. Today, as we listen to the following music by Annie, let's reflect on how we can seek to be more supportive to our brothers and sisters, inside and outside of the faith.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video]

<https://youtu.be/Cv0dJ0kJHYI>

For Christ and the Church,

played by Annie Center

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Gracious God, we give because you have so generously given to us. Take these gifts and multiply them. Send these gifts to places and people where they are needed so that others may see Jesus. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance

Clothing and Holy God, Thank you for bringing our community of followers together this morning. You bind us together with your love, setting an example for us to follow. Your grace and peace unifies us to be your hands and feet in this world. As we go throughout our week, may we be reminded that you set an example that we should be clothed in kindness, gentleness, patience and compassion as we go throughout our daily lives and encounter people each day. Be with us today, this week and always. In your holy and loving name we pray, amen.

May God reach out to you and nourish you; May Christ Jesus renew you in the image of your creator; And may the Holy Spirit lead you with cords of kindness and Love. We go in peace to love and serve the Lord, ...In the name of Christ. Amen.

Postlude

Lord of Light, Your Name Outshining,

played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/ufCWn86HF4U>