

Script Worship Resources - Good to Go

<https://youtu.be/OhCPKqagz8g>

Pentecost 14, Year B,

29th August, 2021

Psalm 15 CEV / Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23 CEV

Intro/Prelude *Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands*

Irish melody, played by Annie Center

<https://youtu.be/hv39BMw-Pb4>

Welcoming Guests/Announcements

Pass the Peace

Call to Worship (Responsive)

One: In deep gratitude we come to worship God.

All: We recognize God as the source of all goodness.

One: All good gifts come from the Spirit of God:

All: Love, peace, joy, patience, kindness, gentleness are all of God.

One: We come with grateful hearts, not for things, but for who God is.

All: We gather to show our gratitude in song and prayer.

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, let's think about how we share God's light with others, as we listen to our good friend Mike Stern perform his song, *Shadows*.

Reflection Video *Shadows*

written and performed by Mike Stern, used with permission

<https://youtu.be/gLSGxKw23dc>

Invocation

O God from whom every gift derives, we gather to worship You this day. You are an awesome God, greater than our comprehension or our imagination. You are beyond any word we could ever use to describe You. And yet, through Jesus, we know the intimacy of Your vast love.

We have come to You in thanksgiving and praise, to know that You are God and to place our lives anew into Your perspective. Enlarge our vision this hour with Your Word. Instill in us, again, Your hope in place of our despair, Your peace where our hatred threatens, Your joy amidst our depression, Your love overwhelming our apathy.

May Your Holy Spirit surround and indwell this congregation now, and forevermore. In Jesus we pray. Amen.

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

In our reading from the Psalms today, let's give some thought to our own actions. Are we treating others as she should?

Psalm of the Day Psalm 15 CEV

Who may stay in God's temple or live on the holy mountain of the Lord?

Only those who obey God and do as they should. They speak the truth and don't spread gossip; they treat others fairly and don't say cruel things.

They hate worthless people, but show respect for all who worship the Lord. And they |keep their promises, no matter what the cost.

They lend their money without charging interest, and they don't take bribes to hurt the innocent

Scripture Video

Psalm 15 *Dwelling In God's Tabernacle*

Lectionary bible reading

https://youtu.be/sqIvINh_Mts

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 continue to keep Robert Oberg and his family in prayer as he continues to recover from a significant stroke. He has made some progress this week in beginning to feed himself, and some possible finger and toe movement.

Let's also remember Kristi Morris following her recent hospitalization and treatment for cardiac afib.

This morning we also lift up Tammy Worden, who has now been diagnosed with COVID.

Pastoral Prayer

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

Almighty God, Jesus said that he came to that we might live and have it abundantly. We praise you and we thank you for his purpose in coming and we pray to you that we might indeed experience the fullness of the life that he has promised. Take from us, O Lord, all those things that get in the way of our relationship with you—our pride and self-certainty, our doubt and our fear, and all those things that come from our human nature that blind us to the wonders of your presence and the glory of what you are doing in our midst..... Lord, hear our prayer....

Lord, you know very well how our traditions and our understandings can become instruments of judgment rather than tools of your grace. We pray today O God for all those who have been hurt by our [thoughtless] insistence that our particular way is the only right way. Touch the hearts of those who have turned away from you because we have caused your light within us to grow dim and brighten, we pray, our souls..... Lord, hear our prayer....

Lord, we thank you for the refreshing wind of your Spirit—for how you breathe into us new life and new hope and lead us to new understandings. In you we find wholeness for both body and soul. We pray now, O God, that this wholeness may not only not only grow within us—but that it might enter into and transform the lives of those whom we name before you at this time. We lift them up, O Lord, and also we lift up those situations and those persons, in thanksgiving, and with prayers of intercession, that you have placed upon our hearts this day...

We pray all these things, O God, in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord and our Saviour, our brother and our friend. Amen.

In our gospel lesson this morning, we hear Jesus reprimanding the Pharisees concerning what comes out of their mouths. As we listen to these words from Mark, let's reflect on our own lives. Do we let things escape our own mouths that are less than loving?

Gospel Lesson Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23 CEV

Some Pharisees and several teachers of the Law of Moses from Jerusalem came and gathered around Jesus.

They noticed that some of his disciples ate without first washing their hands.[a]

The Pharisees and many other Jewish people obey the teachings of their ancestors. They always wash their hands in the proper way[b] before eating.

None of them will eat anything they buy in the market until it is washed. They also follow a lot of other teachings, such as washing cups, pitchers, and bowls.[c]

The Pharisees and teachers asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples obey what our ancestors taught us to do? Why do they eat without washing their hands?"

Jesus replied: You are nothing but show-offs! The prophet Isaiah was right when he wrote that God had said, *"All of you praise me with your words, but you never really think about me.*

It is useless for you to worship me, when you teach rules made up by humans."

You disobey God's commands in order to obey what humans have taught.

Jesus called the crowd together again and said, "Pay attention and try to understand what I mean.

The food that you put into your mouth doesn't make you unclean and unfit to worship God. The bad words that come out of your mouth are what make you unclean."[a]

Out of your heart come evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder,

unfaithfulness in marriage, greed, meanness, deceit, indecency, envy, insults, pride, and foolishness.

All of these come from your heart, and they are what make you unfit to worship God

Scripture Video

Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

Authentic Religion

Lectionary bible reading

<https://youtu.be/C3rid2W9DQk>

Message - *Good to Go*

So what comes to mind when you hear the word “defiled.” For most of us, I would venture to guess that we would imagine things that have been soiled, that need cleaning to be something we would consider to be “good to go” again. We probably think of things that used to be clean and pristine, but now have dirt, grime, or stains on them that in some way make them less worthy, or inadequate for our purposes. What criteria do we use to make that determination? Certainly with food, we want to make sure it’s clean enough to ensure we don’t get sick from eating it. Our notions of what is good-looking food largely are derived from this usually accurate conception that unblemished food is better for us, and therefore more appealing.

We often carry this sense of cleanliness to what we wear as well. We like our clothes to be clean and stain free, our shoes to be shiny without scuff marks, and some of us even like our cars to be pristine as well. That’s one camp I don’t fit into. Generally, it’s just best if you don’t look at my backseat or the general appearance of my vehicle. Let’s just say in my recreational time, it sees its share of dirt roads and mud. So we like our food and our stuff to be clean and in good shape. In these times of pandemic, we also like to make sure our hands are kept clean and sanitized, to prevent the spread of illness as well.

What about our people? What criteria do we use to evaluate them and determine who belongs in our tent and who doesn’t meet the measure up? Like the rest of our stuff, do we go primarily by appearance? Or do we look a little deeper? That’s what Jesus is getting at in our gospel lesson this morning. The Pharisees address Jesus using their standards in assessing his disciples as “unclean” or “defiled.” According to their standards, one must always purify oneself by ritually washing one’s hands prior to eating. Under their guidance, this has become the widespread interpretation of the law brought by Moses’ at Mt. Sinai. But is it really so accurate?

The scripture in question is Exodus 30:17-21: It reads, “The LORD spoke to Moses: You shall make a bronze basin with a bronze stand for washing. You shall put it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and you shall put water in it; with the water Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet. When they go into the tent of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to make an offering by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, so that they may not die. They shall wash their hands and their feet, so that they may not die: it shall be a perpetual ordinance for them, for him and for his descendants throughout their generations.” Now this was clearly a proclamation for the priests of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, to ritually cleanse themselves before handling the sacrifices to God.

Yet the Pharisees deemed that since all Jews were in the same covenantal relationship with God, every meal was to be viewed as a sacrifice to God and therefore all had to abide by this ritual ordinance. Like us, they viewed all men as potential ministers, the priesthood of

all believers. They took something that was meant to purify someone in the presence of God and pulled it out of context to have meaning it originally did not have. But more importantly, by finding criteria to categorize someone as outside the fold, it reinforces the stereotyping and ostracizing already present in so much of the scriptural interpretation of the day. People like lepers, Samaritans, and Gentiles in general, were excluded from Jewish society because of their religious practices, physical health, or simply how they were born.

But Jesus turns this on its head. He tells them it's not the rituals or whether what they put in their bodies is clean, it's what comes out that matters. It's how they act and what they say that determines how pure and holy they are, not all the external factors. It's not their personal hygiene, the cleanliness of their clothes, or the details of their birth that define their value. In other words, you can't stereotype someone based on external factors. It's what's inside that counts. It's not the cleanliness of your hands, but the status of your heart that matters. In that time the thought was that the source of your thought and attitudes was based in your physical heart. It was a very egregious sin to "harden your heart" or "turn your heart away from God." Yet that is exactly what the theology the Pharisees promoted could lead to. Jesus consistently countered this narrative with a different approach to those we would stereotype and exclude.

In the story of the Good Samaritan he shows how all are our neighbors and worthy of compassion. In the story of the Syrophenician woman at the well, it is her inner faith that makes her worthy. The list goes on and on. But it's important to note that Jesus doesn't naysay the ritual itself, just the conclusions the Pharisees have drawn from it.

Throughout history, this very passage has been used over and over to actually discriminate and exclude people based on their attachment to rituals. Jews, Catholics, and many others have been shunned and abused because of the importance of rituals in their faith practice. But that begs the question, are we without ritual ourselves? Do we not follow familiar patterns in worship, and all know verbatim things like the Lord's Prayer and our own practice of communion? Or is it because the ritual of others is so different that we aren't comfortable with it? It's human nature, after all, to be comfortable with the familiar, with those who are more like us. We like to know what to expect next and therefore to be around those whose practices and behavior are more like our own cultural heritage.

The problem occurs when we transfer negative characteristics onto those whose culture, lifestyle, and behavior differ from our own. There's a problem when we expect others from different perspectives to adapt to our point of view in order to be accepted by us. If the Pharisees had recognized the sincerity of the disciples faith and just looked past the ritual differences, we wouldn't have a reading this morning to reflect on.

It is a struggle though, isn't it? So much of popular culture is focused on stereotyping other people as the cause of all our problems, and sadly, often using parts of scripture, pulled out of context, to justify it. How often have we heard about all the criminals streaming across our borders? Yet statistically, immigrants commit crime at a much lower rate than citizens

do. We cling to this false image because they are different and foreign to us, and we quote part of Romans out of context, to justify our actions because we're "obeying the law." Yet later in the very same chapter, we're told that to love others is the fulfillment of the law. We also choose to ignore countless verses in the Old Testament that speak to treating foreigners residing in your land as equals.

People in the LGBT community are portrayed as morally bereft and child molesters, often compared to those who practice bestiality, yet statistically they are less likely to abuse children as heterosexuals. Their identity is different from what has traditionally been accepted and normal. So we drag five isolated verses from scripture, all of which are found in sections speaking specifically against pagan worship practices and pedophilia to justify treating them as defiled and not worthy.

You may be thinking, "but pastor, does that mean that anything goes, that we don't have any moral compass?" My response to that would be to say most certainly we have a moral compass to follow. Jesus was quite clear that the law and the prophets can be summed up in two commandments which I'll paraphrase: Love God with all your heart, body and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself without judgment. It's not an easy path to follow. Our passage in Mark is pretty clear though. We need to focus on keeping our own hearts clean and open, not judge others for our perceptions of their worthiness. Who is welcome in our tent? Should anyone be excluded? Do we let stereotypes, which never take into account the heart of the individual, determine who we see as defiled and unclean? Or do we look at the individual and see what their heart shows?

I hope that we truly work to not only avoid judging people based on what's on the outside, but also speak against those who do. There are many ugly voices rising in the world today that would have us judge others as less than, as defiled and unclean. May we never forget that all, ALL, are created in the image of God, and of equal worth to ourselves. Ours is a tent that has no limits. May it be so. Amen

Call to Serve.

Giving is not a casual act—it relates God's work to our work.

Peter writes: "as each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace, that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."

Let us give as people whose work is inextricably linked to God's great works of creation, redemption and empowerment.

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 selection played by Annie, let's reflect on our own "tents." Are they big enough? Is there room for all and if not, how can we change who we are as a community to be the welcoming place we are called to be?"

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [Video] *The Longer I Serve Him*

words and music by William and Gloria Gaither,
played by Annie Center, used and reported under
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https://youtu.be/BkpRhn2u_wQ

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty God, giver of every good and perfect gift, teach us to give to you all that we have and all that we are, that we may praise you not with our words only, but with our whole lives.

Blessing/Assurance

Those who turn from the world and turn back to God are forgiven. Those who strive to do better are forgiven. Those who seek to repair and heal in our broken world are forgiven. All of us, when we profess our faith in Christ, know the forgiveness of our God, because we feel the pull to engage in restoring what has been broken. Live into forgiveness with accountability. Love one another as Christ has loved you and go forth sharing the good news of our God in Jesus Christ. Amen.

As we extinguish this candle, let's carry it's divine spark into our own lives this week, shining God's like into the lives of all we encounter. Amen.

Postlude *I Will Serve Thee*

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<https://youtu.be/rmL2BbkLicg>