

Worship Service - “Rest Stops”

2nd Sunday in Lent, Year C,

13th March, 2022

Philippians 3:17-4:1 NIV / Luke 10: 25-37 NSRV

Prelude

Gospel Opening (Video) [Oh Happy Day](#) Peaceful Harmony Mass Choir

Written by Edward F Rimbault and Philip Doddridge,

Performed by Peaceful Harmony Mass Choir

and posted to YouTube by okapy1108

Welcome Guests / Announcements

Pass the Peace

Opening Hymn – *Here in This Place*

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Call to Worship (responsive)

One: When the shadows grow at the edge of the road,

All: O God, keep us steady, help us move onward.

One: When the path is unclear, and fog settles in,

All: O God, help us to overcome our fears, and live in faith.

One: When it becomes difficult to continue on,

All: O God, make Your presence known to us,

One: Despite our weariness and our struggles

All: O God, be with us, always.

Invocation

Steadfast God, we confess that our courage is fleeting. Fear overtakes us; we become weary and overwhelmed. Renew our spirits, O God. Help us to lean on You, to find our strength in one another. Lift us up, and help us to lift up one another. Inspire us, O God, to keep moving on, despite what the world throws at us, despite our disappointments and shortcomings. For You are our Rock, our Strength, and Our Redeemer. Come, Holy One; come, Spirit of Life. Come into this holy place and this holy hour, and fill us again with assurance of your grace.

We ask it in Jesus' name, **Amen.**

First Scripture Reading – Philippians 3:17-4:1 NIV

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.

For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

Special Music (Video)

[The Good Samaritan](#)

Sean Dietrich

posted to YouTube by Steve Wilson. This song from Sean Dietrich at www.seandietrich.com combined with some pics helps tell the story of the Good Samaritan.

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

We will wait for you, O God. Your Spirit compels us to go into the wilderness, and we ask for the courage to examine the desert places in our hearts, and to be willing to face the adversaries in our lives— that which lures us away from being who you have created us to be.

We pray for the courage to face our wild beasts and fears. Relieve the troubles of our hearts, and the devastation of our distress. Turn your love towards us that we may know your grace in our loneliness and afflictions. O God, may the faith within us get out, onto our lips, into our feet and hands, through our hearts.

May what we sing and pray here in this place, get past our inhibitions and into our actions this week.

May the passion for your Gospel burn within our hearts, so that we cannot be silent in the face of deception or injustice.

If old-fashioned ways of sharing faith do not ring true to us, then let us persist until we find ways to tell our story that reveal Your presence in our lives.

Help us, God, please help us to just get it out, not arrogantly, but as our humble confession of what we believe.

We pray this prayer, knowing that you watch over us, and deliver us. We wait for you, O God. Precious Holy One A brief look at the news shouts out that there are many dark places in our world. Darkness through mindless violence
Darkness through frustration and horror
Darkness through grief and distress
Darkness through pain and disease
Darkness deep in the souls of those we love...

Holy One into these dark places into those unnamed dark places into the darkness of fear and loneliness pour out your radiance shower down your light break through pure brilliance until the darkness is dispelled and our hearts find peace and the light of hope can shine forth again fresh and new with this new day hear our prayers we pray,

Teach us your Way, O Lord Jesus. Lead us on a well-lighted path. In the times when you are silent, grant us the courage to wait, trusting in your grace that brings your resurrection power to our dead ends.

You are doing a 'new thing' among us. though, it is hard to see at times what that 'new thing' is. We bring to you our grieving over what is being lost, our fears about what the future might hold, our desire to love and serve you.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, you are refining us, purifying our discipleship, pulling us into following Jesus In this new world.

Grant us mercy and grace to trust you more deeply, for the only secure place is with you, our light and our salvation, the stronghold of our life.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus, the first-born of your new creation our hope, our life. Amen.

Gospel Reading Luke 10: 25-37 NSRV

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"

He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”

But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.

He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’

Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”

He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Message – “*Rest Stops*”

Who is our neighbor? That's probably one of the biggest biblical questions Christians have wrestled with since the Gospel of Luke was written in the late first century of the last millennium. Is it based on geography, based only on those who live in our immediate vicinity or our local community? Is it limited to people who are like us? Or believe the same as us, in other words, fellow Christians?

The story of the Good Samaritan is one that is familiar to most of us. So much so, that the term “Good Samaritan” has become part of our vernacular whether we know the story behind it or not. This concept of selflessly assisting others in need is actually protected in most places by what we refer to as “Good Samaritan” laws. These laws attempt to protect someone from legal liability should they choose to try to assist someone like the victim in

our gospel lesson today. Most of us have a sense that to help another in need is what we call "ethical" behavior, in other words, it's the right thing to do.

John Sommerville, a history professor at the University of Florida has been carrying out an exercise with his students for years. He challenges his students with the following thought experiment. Imagine that you see a little old lady coming down the street at night and she is carrying a great big purse. It suddenly occurs to you that she very little and frail and it would be incredibly easy just to knock her over and grab the purse. But you don't. Why not? There are only two possible answers. The answer of "shame and honor" culture is that you don't do it because it would make you a despicable person unworthy of respect. It would dishonor your family or tribe. People would despise you for picking on the weak. It would not be a strong thing to do and it is critical that strength be respected. That approach, the professor says, is self regarding. You are thinking almost entirely of yourself and your tribe. You are thinking only of honor and reputation. The second option is that you would imagine how painful it would be to be mugged and how hard it would be for the woman if she depended on the money in her purse and it was taken from her. You ask yourself, if I mug her, what will happen to her and what will happen to the people who depend on her. All else being equal you want her to have a good life that is safe, so you don't do it. This is called the "regards for others" ethic which is utterly different from the "shame and honor" culture. Professor Sommerville would ask his class, "All right, how many of you would take the purse and why not." No one would take the purse, and the reason almost totally is the regards for others ethic. Then he would point out that they had chosen the Christian way of life.

The ethical system that dominated the world before Jesus was the "shame and honour" ethic and it did not work out for the poor very well. However, he also points out that as a culture we have moved back towards the "shame and honor" culture in more of a focus on ourselves over others, even from a Christian perspective. It's more on how we can save ourselves by ensuring we don't jeopardize our own salvation status by acting improperly than it is about how it impacts the other. We help the old lady because we're expected to as Christians. And if the wealthier among us can benefit indirectly at her expense through the tax and financial structure of the "system," her individual radar doesn't cross their radar, as they aren't directly blamed for her loss.

Another example of how our own perspective can influence how we may react is reflected in another classroom exercise. John Darley and Daniel Batson decided to replicate the story of the Good Samaritan with seminary students. A few variables were introduced. The seminarians were interviewed and asked why they wanted to go into ministry. There were a variety of responses, but the vast majority said they went into ministry to help people. Then they were asked to prepare a short sermon--half of them on the story of the Good Samaritan and the other half on other topics. Finally they were told to go over to a building on campus to present their sermons. Along the way, the researchers had

strategically positioned an actor in an alley to play the part of the man who was mugged in Jesus' story. He was slumped over and groaning loud enough for passersby to hear. The researchers hypothesized that those who said they went into ministry to help people and those who had just prepared the sermon on the Good Samaritan would be the most likely to stop and help. But that wasn't the case.

And the reason is the final variable introduced by the researchers. Just before the seminarians left to give their sermon, the researcher looked at his watch and said one of two things. To some seminarians, the researcher said, "You're late. They were expecting you a few minutes ago. You better hurry." To others, the researcher said, "You're early. They aren't expecting you for a few minutes, but why don't you start heading over there?" Interested in the results? Only 10 percent of the seminary students who were in a hurry stopped to help, while 63 percent of those who weren't in a hurry stopped to help. In several cases, a seminary student going to give his talk on the parable of the Good Samaritan literally stepped over the victim as he hurried on his way!

Darley and Batson concluded that it didn't matter whether someone wanted to help People or whether someone had just read and was preparing to preach on the parable of the Good Samaritan. The only thing that mattered was whether or not they were in a hurry. They concluded, "The words, 'You're late,' had the effect of making someone who was ordinarily compassionate into someone who was indifferent to suffering." Both of these examples illustrate our own personal struggle with putting our focus on others before ourselves, which certainly is an important aspect of this parable.

Jesus, in a very rabbinical way, leads this lawyer through the use of a parable to understand that the most offensive of outsiders, a Samaritan, is actually the one whose behavior would fit into God's kin-dom, the one who shows mercy and compassion. The assumption we are led to make is that the priest and Levite do not stop because they fear the man is dead, and they don't want to make themselves "unclean" by interacting with a corpse unnecessarily, Yet the Samaritan takes the time to find out he is in fact alive, and in dire need of assistance.

But in the spirit of our Lenten journey theme of looking at parables from different perspectives, let's take a different look at this one. What if the victim in the story is an outcast? What if he is a Samaritan, or leper? Someone who is outcast and unclean by definition? How does that change the dynamic? Well, certainly there is more justification for the priest and the Levite to not assist. It would take them days to go through the ritual cleansing required to make themselves pure again, and that would affect their livelihood in the process. Would the Samaritan have reacted the same way if it was a leper lying in the road? Samaritans also had purity codes to adhere to. We often forget that they too practiced a form of Judaism as well, which is why they were so despised by the Jews in Judea as heretics. Would he have passed by as well rather than defile himself?

In our story, we make the assumption about why the others passed the victim by, but we aren't told for sure the exact reason. If the victim was someone on the outside of what's acceptable, that makes the Samaritan's actions even more selfless and Christlike. Because that's the bigger point that Jesus makes throughout the Gospel of Luke. He and his followers are starting something new that doesn't rely on the letter of the law and rules of the past. They will eat wheat they gather in the fields on the Sabbath if they need the nourishment. They will fellowship with Gentiles and outcasts because the fellowship, compassion, and love are more important than the rules and prejudices that keep them apart. We too have our own "Samaritans," those we stereotype and outcast because of who they are. Instead of seeing the individual, we allow ourselves to outcast entire groups as well, scapegoating many innocent people for the actions of a tiny few, which leads to what happened this weekend.

What about us? What if the person we encounter is beaten in the road is homeless? An addict? Unkept and unshowered? Do we walk on by? What if they're completely different ethnically or have a different faith? A Muslim? We too can be challenged by the same roadblocks to Christ-like compassion and mercy as the characters in our story. We too have our own prejudices and standards that keep us from stopping. The question we need to ask ourselves is can we too, like the Samaritan, take our focus away from ourselves and put someone else before ourselves? Like the people in the crowd around Jesus hearing this parable, we too have our own "Samaritans," those we stereotype and outcast because of who they are.

Instead of seeing the individual, we allow ourselves to outcast entire groups as well, scapegoating many innocent people for the actions of a tiny few, which leads to what happened this weekend. As we leave here today and reflect over the next week, let us each give some thought to who are the outcasts in our mind, who are the Samaritans in our lives? And how can we change that mindset so that we can stop to help, instead of walking past in ignorance. May we each find our own ways to be more of a Samaritan. Amen.

A Call to Serve

Abram trusted, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. The Psalmist waited for God, while troubles raged. Jesus and Paul saw the enemies of faith around them. But by God's grace, our world has more wonder than trouble. By God's grace, we are gifted with hope and resilience. By God's grace, love and life have triumphed and we are invited into the joyful communion of God and all God's people. Let our tithes and offerings be a holy gesture of thanksgiving, a song of joy and blessing. Let us gather our gifts with grateful praise, and offer them to God's purposes.

A Time for Reflection - *Musical Interlude*

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of all goodness, we thank you for your blessings:
more numerous than the stars;
more bountiful than the greatest of harvests;
more steady than the beat of our hearts.

Here we dedicate our gifts
and rededicate ourselves to your vision of hope and wholeness.

May all that we do and all that we give be pleasing to you,
and a testimony to your loving purposes.

We ask it in Jesus' name; Amen.

Hymn

For We are Strangers No More

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Benediction

Now go, to be God's blessing to others, to share the story of Jesus' love and hope for all, and pour out the Spirit's compassion in every corner of your life. Amen

Postlude