

Worship Service Resources “The Right Way”

Pentecost 6, Year C,

17th July, 2022

Luke 10:38-42 NIV / Psalm 15 NIV

Prelude (Video) *He’s Been There*

Music by Jelaire Richardson, played by Annie Center

Gospel Chorus (Video) *Hold To God's Unchanging Hand*

written by Franklin Lycurgus Eiland and Jennie Wilson, performed and posted to YouTube by the Alfred Street Baptist Church, Alexandria, VA, CCLI song #107548 – PUBLIC DOMAIN, not reporting required

Welcome Guests / Announcements

Pass the Peace (Video) *I Know That My Redeemer Lives*

Music by Lewis Edwards, arr. by Susan Henry, played by Annie Center

Opening Hymn (Lyric Video) *Here In This Place* **6**

written by Marty Haugen,
performed by the Virtual Choir of the
Ferryhill Parish Church, Aberdeen, Scotland

Call to Worship

Come and worship! Be still and aware of God’s presence within and around you.

(Pause)

Come and worship! Be still and aware of Jesus’ presence within and around you.

(Pause)

Come and worship! Be still and aware of the Spirit’s presence within **and around you.**

(Pause)

Be still and know the presence of the Triune God, the Father to whom we come,
the Son through whom we come, the Spirit by whom we come.

(Pause)

Hear his word: Be STILL and know that I am God.

Invocation

God for everything there is a time, and time is now our most precious commodity. Our clocks are always running. From birth to death: during times of joy and sorrow: work and play: business and pleasure: speech and silence: worship and church activities: tick, tock, tick, tock.

We are like Martha, with our long to-do lists.

Slow us down Lord, and for now simply remind us that only one thing is needful, that we be still before you and know that you are God. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Luke 10:38-42 NIV

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

A Time of Prayer

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious and generous God, creator of all, Birth giver of summer, of sun and warmth
Of the green earth and blue seas, We give thanks for the many blessings
Flowing from you to us, like A basket of summer fruit. Gracious and generous God,
creator of all, Pouring your love into Christ Jesus, Your steadfast promise of love, of
Hope, to us, our faith. May we hear your words calling, us to be your Body.

Gracious and generous God, merciful lover Of souls, tend to those who grieve.
We pray for the suffering of this world Of body, mind, and spirit, may your Healing love
embrace the pain Holding it with tender care.

Gracious and generous God, merciful lover Of souls, take our worries and the
Brokenness of the world and heal it As only you are able. Speak into
Our lives and show us the way To be your love, healing.

As Martha offers hospitality to the stranger As Mary listens carefully to your word
May we learn from our sisters to Be your hands and heart in the world. Amen.

Hymn (Video)

***Lead Me, Guide Me* - 553**

written by Doris M. Akers, performed and posted to YouTube
by the Plymouth Choir and Congregation of First Plymouth Church,
Lincoln, Nebraska, Tom Trenney, organist

Reading from the Psalms - Psalm 15 NIV

LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain?

The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from
their heart;

whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on
others;

who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the LORD; who keeps an oath even
when it hurts, and does not change their mind;

who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the
innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

Message (Video) – The Right Way

Righteous. When we hear that word, what do we think of? Do we think of following some
strict moral code, something we can aspire to but just never reach? Or maybe we think of
someone who is good and upstanding, a “righteous” man or woman? Perhaps our cultural
vernacular comes to mind and we think of something generally very favorable, “that's
righteous dude!” From all these conceptions, there's a sense of something or someone that
is ideal, that is a goal that we strive for. Righteous is a positive notion; we never imagine
righteous in a negative sense.

The Psalmist has a lot to say about righteousness in our reading this morning. There's a lot
packed in such a short reading. The first thing I'd like us to consider is why righteousness is
important. The passage opens with a discussion of what is required to enter worship with
the Almighty. The entire psalm is set up at the beginning as a consideration of what one
needs to do to be in the presence of God, which in itself is something worth noting. When

we step into worship in community, God is present. God is not remote, God is here with us.

The Israelites in their trials and travels worshiped in a variety of settings, but after the events and covenant at Mt. Sinai, there was always a set-apart place where they could prepare for and enter into the presence of the Divine. And it wasn't always exactly the same. As they wandered in the desert, that place was a tent that contained the Ark of the Covenant. Once they became settled, the tent was replaced with a grand temple. And after the destruction of the final version of that temple by the Romans, and the diaspora of Jews to the ends of the earth, that place became the synagogue, the living room, or wherever a group of them could gather. The setting wasn't as important as the intentions and the preparation of the gathered community.

Which brings us to the next theme to examine. What is righteousness and what does it mean to be righteous? I think too often we get so hung up on the specifics that we miss the bigger picture.

When we think of the context of the audience for whom the Psalms were written, we get some perspective on what the writer is getting at in today's reading. They had the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, as their guide. These books gave very detailed instructions to guide every aspect of their lives, 613 of them to be exact. These were people who stressed constantly to achieve the perfection these laws expected, in order to be "clean," to be able to enter the Temple and join with the community in worship.

How many of those ancient Jews were successful with that do you think? Probably about the same number of us who have led, pure and unblemished lives. Trying to meet such an unreachable goal left them despondent and defeated, and often they would just chuck it all together and join one of the pagan religions around them.

When you read the Old Testament, particularly Kings and Samuel, it seems like every time God blinked, they were putting poles up in high places and worshiping idols. I guess the benefit was it kept the prophets in business and gave them work on a regular basis. So in Psalm 15, the writer pares it down to some basic themes. The answer the psalmist provides parallels the Ten Commandments, especially the sixth through the tenth.

Have you practiced justice and compassion toward your neighbor and community? These verses teach that worship requires an authentic commitment to social and personal justice. It has everything to do with integrity. It has everything to do with walking the talk, with living out the truths you claim to embrace, to walk blamelessly. The call is to do righteously by speaking the truth and not slander, keeping your commitments and using your resources with equity and integrity.

The focus is on how we live our lives, individually in private, and publicly in community, in relation to each other. Do our actions reflect our faith? To quote one of those aforementioned prophets Micah, do we act justly, show mercy, and walk humbly? Do we mean what we say and honor our commitments? Do we put our faith in God or in money?

We are the living body of Christ in the world. Does our behavior and our work reflect that? And how do we talk about others? Do we always lift others up, or does slander find its way into our speech?

Every area of our daily living should reflect the values we uphold. How we talk to others, how we honor agreements we've made, even how we use our resources. When we shop, or invest, we need to think about how and where we spend our money. Are we buying coffee that is acquired at a price that allows a living income for the farmer who grew it? Does the shop we buy our crafts from or the restaurant we buy our chicken in promote fair and equitable treatment for all, or just for some? Does the hummus we buy support the oppression of others?

In today's Psalm, for every positive trait we are to exhibit, there is a corresponding negative one to avoid. Slander, greed, being untrustworthy are traits to avoid, as are the people who espouse such characteristics. This is where the rubber meets the road. It's a choice between God's values and the values of this world. And therein lies the struggle as well. We are born of this world and part of this culture. We are beset by the same timeless conflict that has been around since these texts were written. Do we "fit in" with the culture at large and embrace that which the world values, or do we set ourselves apart, risking being ostracized and excluded for embracing that which God values and that which Jesus preached so passionately about?

Our text this morning would lead us to believe we should avoid or exclude those who are lost in those traits that exemplify the sin of this world. However ours is also a God of forgiveness, and grace that we humans cannot put limits on. Yet we can "despise" the vile acts of those who are lost. Like our choices in how we spend our resources, we have a choice not to support those who promote values in opposition to God's values, to speak out against those acts that fly in the face of all that Jesus taught in his ministry on Earth. Those same sins of greed and malice, falsehood and slander, and lack of integrity that this psalm addresses. Particularly to those who are our brothers and sisters in Christ, we have a duty, as pointed out in Matthew 18, to seek to redeem our stray siblings behavior, which implies saying something and not being quiet. And whether within our own church family, or in the greater culture, who we support and who we see straying should be a reflection of the values of God we are called to emulate. Looking the other way is not an option, yet judgment and not grace is not an option either. After all, none of us walks through this life pristine. We all stumble and stray at times. It's not an easy walk for sure.

What righteousness boils down to is integrity. It's leading a life that reflects the values of God reflected in the Torah, the writings of the prophets and the songs of the psalmist, and summarized by the savior, Jesus Christ. We have the choice to keep plugging along, following God unless it's too inconvenient or risky, then switching to Caesar's way. One way grants access to the sanctuary, one way leads to standing outside the door. Which choice will you make? May you choose wisely. Amen.

A Call to Serve

Amazing things can happen when we share. When three strange guests showed up outside Abraham and Sarah's tent, they rushed to create a fine feast of the best they had to offer. They did this having no idea that their guests would give them an astonishing gift of great joy. Let us make our offering and sharing of our gifts an abundant feast of the finest gifts we have to share. Perhaps we also will be joyfully surprised by what God has in store for us.

As we listen to the following interlude played by Annie, let's reflect on where we might cave to the world's ways in our own lives, and think about how we might reorient ourselves to the right way.

A Time for Reflection - *Let There Be Light* (Video)

Music by Hubert Parry; Arr. by Mike Carson, played by Annie Center

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (resources)

Generous God, we share what we have because we wish to serve you with the best we have to offer. Bless our tithes and offerings that they may become a bountiful feast for all who need to be filled with good things. Open our eyes to see the strangers you call us to welcome. Empower us to receive them as you do, with radically inclusive hospitality. May we recognize and delight in the gifts they share with us. Amen.

Hymn (Video)

Take My Life

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written by Frances R. Havergal and Henri A.C. Malan,
performed and posted to YouTube by David and Noelle Music

BENEDICTION

Seek first the beloved community of God, the reign of Christ on earth, and live rightly and justly, and everything will come unto you. God will see you through. God knows your wounds and binds them. God knows your mistakes and forgives them. God knows your sorrow and surrounds you with love. Live into the beloved community and God's love will be shared through the love of others. Go and seek the community, and invite others to participate as we live into Christ's reign on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Postlude (Video)

Come Unto Jesus

Music by Orson Pratt Huish; arr. by Tiffany Hobson, played by Annie Center