

Worship Service “Value“

Pentecost 8, Year C, 31st July, 2022

Colossians 3:1-11 NRSV / Luke 12:13-21 NRSV

Prelude

Opening Music (Video)

[Sanctuary](#)

written by John W. Thompson and Randy Scruggs, CCLI SONG # 24140,
1982 Full Armor Publishing Company (Admin. by Peermusic III, Ltd.),
Whole Armor Publishing Company (Admin. by Peermusic III, Ltd.) ,
performed by various artists at Daywind Studio Musicians, used and reported
under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

Welcome Guests / Announcements

Pass the Peace

Opening Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty 37

Call to Worship (responsive)

One: O let us give thanks to the Lord,

All: For the love of God will never end.

One: Let we who love God be unashamed to declare it,

All: Because God has answered our cries for help.

One: The Lord our God has met our every need,

All: We will therefore proclaim the love of the Lord!

Invocation

Masters,

two and more,

competing for our money

clamoring for our time

creating chaos in our lives.

Master,

one God,

quiet us and draw us near.

Epistle Reading – Colossians 3:1-11 NRSV

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).

On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient.

These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life.

But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices

and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.

In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

A Time of Prayer

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Our gracious, eternal God, we bow to you who are from everlasting to everlasting. We thank you for that seed of uneasiness which you have placed within us which causes us to hunger and thirst for an inner peace which endures. Yet we often wander on life's journey and fail to find peace. And we know that our lack of peace is due to the many ways in which we misdirect our inner discontent.

- We set our sights on money and would figuratively build bigger and better barns.
- We keep our eye upon those who are more successful and we become consumed by envy.
- We carry resentment that someone else has more than we and we rail against life's unfairness.

- We long for a security which money might bring but fail to see that there is no way money can cure our inner discontent.

Bend your ear to us this day. Provide your healing touch and help us to redirect our search for security and peace.

- Help us always to remember that it is you who lend us life and that life is a gift.
- Help us to remember that the purpose of life is always greater than knowing that we have enough for tomorrow.
- Help us to remember that our resources also are only a gift and that we are only caretakers with a responsibility for the well-being of our sisters and brothers.
- Help us to remember that true riches do not lie in abundance but in being rich toward you who alone offer a peace which passes all understanding.

O God, we ask that you would transform us and provide us victory over all greed and avarice. Amen.

Hymn

In Christ There Is No East Or West

306

Gospel Reading

Luke 12:13-21 NRSV

Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."

But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?"

And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."

Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly.

And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?"

Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'

But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."

Message – *Value*

Value is a pretty loaded term that could have a wide variety of definitions and implications. As both a noun and a verb, it has substance as well as action. Regardless of the perspective, though, every use of this word implies assigning worth to something. The relative value of something is how much we find it worthwhile to our lives from our own perspective. If we “value” someone’s opinion, that implies that their input and perspective has worth to us. If an item such as our home or car is something we or others consider “valuable,” that implies a certain level of worth or importance as well. Likewise, our “values” are opinions or perspectives that are very important to us, foundational to how we interpret the world and people around us. Value boils down to what we consider of worth and importance, and those items or opinions we cling to in our lives. Our scripture readings this morning are all about value, about what we assign worth to.

In our gospel lesson, Jesus shares a parable which makes a pretty bold statement on the folly of misplaced value. A farmer, when faced with so much success in his harvest that his current barns won’t hold it all, He dreams of the advantages that this new wealth will afford him and plans to build bigger barns to hold all of his wealth, only to find out he is to die that very night. The sinfulness of greed is certainly highlighted in this passage, but often what is left out of the story can be just as informative as what is told. We hear of his success and his plans for all his new wealth, but there is no mention of helping others with his surplus. The scriptures are full of edicts about caring for the widow and the orphan, those among us who have not enough, when we are blessed with an abundance.

It is not the success that is the issue, but the perspective, what it is that we place value on. Not only does the self-focus of greed keep us from thinking of other’s needs, but we also tend to recognize from whence that success comes from. We attribute it to our own efforts and forget that it is God who blesses us and to whom the credit and value should belong. Celebrating the harvest is a time-honored festival in the Jewish tradition but is not focused on our own efforts, but on the blessings we have received and giving the credit where credit is due. Likewise our scripture from Colossians gives a laundry list of sins that are to be avoided: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, greed, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language. We can all too easily focus on the individual edicts in this passage and miss the same bigger picture like our passage from Luke. It’s again where we place value. Is it on ourselves and worldly things, or is it on God and others? Are we only concerned for ourselves and not for our neighbors, and do we give God the gratitude for it all?

Though we may also have some questions with our parable today as well. We may wonder, what is so wrong with storing the overrun of crops? Those of us who tend to

be more frugal-minded have long stashed excess food and supplies in silos, pantries, and basement shelves. I remember my grandmother's basement shelves full of canned tomatoes, fruit, and jelly for the winter months. Most of us probably have also saved, or tried to save, for rainy days and squirreled away funds for retirement, including some of my older relatives who literally hid money inside pillows and under the mattress. Isn't that just being prudent and cautiously planning for economic hard times? After all, even in the bible we have stories about such prudence and frugality.

In Genesis, Joseph advises Pharaoh after interpreting a dream to store up the excess in the fat years so there will be enough for everyone in the famine years to come. To be sure, saving for future material needs is one component of proper stewardship of God's bounty. Appropriate concern for the future is balanced, however, with the injunction to give glory to God and to care for one's neighbor, to provide for the poor and the marginalized, for those without access to the world's wealth or even to basic needs of survival.

In our parable, this is completely absent in the man's focus. It was "his" harvest, "his" barns, and "his" own life. With all this excess at the center of his life, the man plunges into the trap of idolatry, an idolatry that is often idolized by our culture. The nearly constant message of today's media is that life consists in the abundance of possessions. We are encouraged to spend more, have more, and use more; to supersize and maximize; to bank on the appearance of wealth as a sign of the good life. As our culture cultivates the drive to constantly buy things we don't need, it champions a way of life that this parable characterizes as folly.

One could use the metaphor of a boomerang. A well-known fact about a boomerang is, once thrown, it returns to the thrower. The least remembered fact is that the boomerang is intended to be a weapon and only returns if it misses the target. I can keep thinking I'm throwing myself at life with more effort, wisdom, money, more, more, more – and it will somehow change all in my favor. But instead I find everything I've thrown has missed the target of a better life and comes back slightly more used than when I threw it. The paradox is that, in keeping our lives, building our lives, and living our lives for ourselves, we waste all the life that is in us. What do we focus on, what do we value? Do we have more than we need? Is our good stewardship just that, or do we put too much of ourselves into our resources. Likewise as a community of faith, do we focus on our bigger barn and accumulation of resources at the expense of God and our mission as the body of Christ?

I'd like to close today with a humorous little story that boils it all down into simple terms. A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3. The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my

brother have the first pancake; I can wait." Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Okay; Ryan, you be Jesus!"

What do we value, and how does that inform the values by which we live? My hope and prayer is that we seek to value that which our Lord and Savior teaches, that we seek God's kin-dom drawing near and not the world in which we live; May it be so, Amen.

A Call to Serve

Jesus said, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." (Luke 12:15) The promise of life abundantly invites us to trust God's provision and abundance of resources for all. We share our gifts from the abundance given to us.

A Time for Reflection - *Musical Interlude*

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, may we demonstrate our love through these gifts. Bless them and magnify them so that all creation will benefit from your abundance and gift of life and love.

Hymn

Move in Our Midst

418

BENEDICTION

Go now as those raised with Christ,
wondering at God's great love
and telling the story of your salvation.
Be on your guard against all kinds of greed
and set your minds on the ways of heaven.

And 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